Quite the characteristics of a dissolute young spendthrift

Cordelia H.

Miss Cordelia. I think you are rather too hard on that. Think you of it. Yours E. L. A.

A James

DARNLEY;

OR, THE

FIELD OF THE CLOTH OF GOLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "RICHELIEU," &c.

"I do not think a braver gentleman,
More daring or more bold, is now alive
To grace this latter age with noble deeds."

SHAKSPEARE

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1830.

★Charles T. Harbeck

24, MAR. 04

DARNLEY.

CHAPTER I.

GLOUCESTER.—Talking of hawking, nothing else, my Lord.
SHAKSPEARE.

ON arriving at the palace, Sir Osborne found that he had been sent for by the King, and hurrying his steps towards the privy chamber, he was met by Henry himself, bearing a hawk upon his hand, and armed with a stout leaping pole, as if prepared for the field. "Come, Sir Knight," cried the King, "if you would see sport, follow quick. Bennet has just marked a heron go down by the side of the river, and I am resolved to fly young Jacob here, that his wings may not rust. Follow quick!"

Thus speaking, the King made all speed out of the palace, and cutting partly across the park, and round the base of the hill, soon reached the edge of the river, where slower progress became necessary, and he could converse with the young Knight, without interrupting his sport. Their conversation, however, was solely about hawking and its accessories, and winding along by the side of the sedges with which the bank was lined, they tried to raise their game by cries, and by beating the rushes with the leaping pole.

For a long way no heron made its appearance, and Henry was beginning to get impatient, just in the same proportion as he had been eager in setting out. Unwilling, however, to yield his sport, after persisting some time in endeavouring, with the aid of Sir Osborne, to make the prey take flight, he sent back the only attendant that had followed him, for a dog, and went on slowly with the Knight, pursuing the course of the river. When they had proceeded about two hundred yards, and had arrived at a spot where the bank rose into a little mound, the Knight paused, while Henry, rather crossed

with not having instantly met with the amusement he expected, sauntered on, bending his eyes upon the ground.

"Hist, your Grace! Hist!" cried Sir Osborne: "I have him!"

"Where, man? Where?" cried Henry, looking round without seeing any thing. "God's life, where?"

"Here, your grace! Here!" replied the Knight. "Do you not see him?—with one leg raised, and the claw contracted, gazing on the water as intently as a lady in a looking-glass,—by that branch of a tree that is floating down."

"Ha! Yes, yes!" cried Henry. "The long neck and the blue back! 'Tis he—Whoop! Sir Heron! Whoop! Cry him up, Maurice! Cry him up!"

Sir Osborne joined his voice to the King's, and their united efforts reaching the ears of the long-legged fowl they were in search of, he speedily spread his wings, stretched out his neck, and rose heavily from the water. With a whoop and a cry the King slipped the jesses of his falcon, and flew him after the heron, who, for a moment, not perceiving the adversary that pursued him, took his flight over the fields, instead of rising high. On went the heron, on went the falcon, and on went Henry after them; till coming to a little muddy creek, which thereabouts found its way into the river, the King planted his pole with his accustomed activity, and threw himself forward for the leap. Unfortunately, however, at the very moment that his whole weight was cast upon the pole, in the midst of the spring, the wood snapped, and in an instant Sir Osborne saw the King fall flat on his face, and nearly disappear in the ooze and water with which the creek was filled. Henry struggled to free himself, but in vain, for the tenacity of the mud prevented his raising his head, so that in another minute he must inevitably have been drowned, had not Sir Osborne plunged in to his aid, and lifted his face above the water, thus giving him room to breathe. Short as had been the time, however, that respiration had been impeded, the King's powers were nearly exhausted, and even with the Knight's assistance, he could not raise himself from the position in which he had fallen.

Though an unsafe experiment for both, considering the mud and slime with which they were entangled, nothing remained for Sir Osborne, but to take the King in his arms, and endeavour to carry him to the bank; and this at length he accomplished, sometimes slipping, and sometimes staggering, with the uncertain nature of the footing and the heavy burden that

he carried; but still supported by his vast strength, he contrived to keep himself from falling, proceeding slowly and carefully forward, and assuring himself of the firmness of each step before he took another.*

With a feeling of inexpressible gladness, he seated Henry on the bank, and kneeling beside him, expressed his hopes that he had received no injury. "No," said the King, faintly: "No—but, Maurice, you have saved my life. Thank God! and thank you!"

A pause now ensued, and the young Knight endeavoured, as well as circumstances would permit, to cleanse the countenance and hands of the Monarch from the effects of the fall. While he was thus employed, the King gradually recovered his breath and strength, and from time to time uttered a word or two of thanks, or directions, till at last Bennet, the attendant, was seen approaching with a dog.

"Stay, stay, Sir Osborne," said the Monarch, "here comes Bennet. We will send him for fresh clothes.—Where is the falcon?—By my faith, I owe you much—Ay, as much as life!—Whistle for the falcon, I have not breath."

Sir Osborne uttered a long falconer's whistle, and in a moment the bird hovered above them, and perched upon the hand the Monarch extended for it, showing by its bloody beak and claws that it had struck the prey. Nearly at the same time came up Bennet, who, as may be supposed, expressed no small terror and surprise at beholding the King in such a situation, and was preparing to fill the air with ejaculations and lamentations, when Henry stopped him in the midst.

"No, Bennet, no!" cried he, "keep all that for when I *am* dead quite! Ha, man! 'twill be time enough then. Thanks to Sir Osborne, I am not dead at present. Here, take this bird. I have lost both hood and jesses in that foul creek.—Hie to the manor, Bennet, and fetch me a large cloak with a hood, and another for Sir Osborne.—We will not return all draggled with the ooze, ha, Maurice? Quick, Bennet! But hold, man, not a word of this misadventure, on your life!"

"Ah! your Grace knows that I am discreet," replied the footman.

"Ay, as discreet as the babbling echo, or a jay, or a magpie," cried Henry; "but get thee gone, quick! and return by

* Hall gives an account of this event with very little variation in the circumstances, stating that only a footman was with the King, one Moody; but, of course, Vonderbrugius may be relied on as the most correct.

the path, we came, for we follow slowly. Lend me your arm, Sir Osborne. We will round by yon little bridge.—A curse upon the leaping pole, say I.—By my fay, I will have all the creeks in England stopped.—I owe my life to you, but hereafter we will speak of that—I will find means to repay it."

"I am more than repaid, your Grace," said Sir Osborne, "by the knowledge that, but for my poor aid, England might have lost her King, and within a few hours the whole realm might have been drowned in tears."

"Ay, poor souls! I do believe they would regret me," said the Monarch; "for, Heaven knows! it is my wish to see them happy. A King's best elegy is to be found in the tears of his subjects, Sir Osborne, and every king should strive to merit their love when living, and their regret when dead."

Strange as it may seem, to those accustomed to picture to themselves Henry the Eighth, as the sanguinary and remorseless tyrant which he appeared in latter years; yet such were the sentiments with which he set out in his regal career, while youth, prosperity, and power, were all in their first freshness—'twas the tale of the spoiled child, which was always good-humoured when it was pleased. Now the first twelve years of Henry's reign offered nought but pleasure, and during their lapse he appeared a gay, light-hearted, gallant monarch, fit to win and rule the hearts of a brave people, for nothing yet had arisen to call into action the mighty vices that lay latent in his nature. Gradually, however, luxury produced disease, and disease pain, and pain called up cruelty; while long prosperity and uncontradicted sway, made him imperious, irascible, and almost frantic under opposition. But such was not the case now, and it was only the close observer of human nature, that could at all perceive in the young and splendid Monarch the traits that promised what he would afterward become.

Discoursing on the unlucky termination of their sport, Henry proceeded with Sir Osborne into the Park, and there awaited the coming of the servant with their cloaks; feeling a sort of foppish unwillingness to enter the Palace in the state in which the fall had left him, his whole dress being stiff with mud, and both face and hands in any thing but a comely condition. Many men might have taken advantage of Sir Osborne's situation, to urge their suit; but notwithstanding the very great claim that the accident of the morning had given him upon Henry, the Knight was hardly satisfied that it had occurred. He deemed that, in common decency, he should be obliged to delay the communication which he had proposed to

make that very evening, and thereby allow Wolsey to arrive before the event was decided, which for every reason he had hoped to avoid. Were he to press his suit now, it would seem, he thought, surprising, from the King's gratitude, what his justice might have denied, and indelicately to solicit a high reward for an accidental service. His great hope, however, was, that in the course of the evening the King might himself renew the subject, and by offering some token of his thanks, afford an opportunity of pleading for justice for his father and himself.

The discomfited falconers waited not long in the park before they were rejoined by the servants bearing the cloaks, which the King had commanded, but notwithstanding that they soon reached the palace, the clammy wetness of his whole dress caused several slight shiverings to pass over the limbs of Henry, and after some persuasion by Sir Osborne, he was induced to ask the counsel of his surgeon, who recommended him instantly to bathe, and then endeavour to sleep.

This was, of course, a signal for the young Knight to withdraw, and taking leave of the King, he retired to his apartments to change his own dress, which was not in a much more comfortable state than that of the Monarch. Our old friend Longpole soon answered to his call, and while aiding him in his arrangements, without any comment upon the state of his clothes, which he seemed to regard as nothing extraordinary, the honest custrel often paused to give a glance at his master's face, as one who has something to communicate, the nature of which may not be very palatable to the hearer.

"Well, Longpole," said the Knight, after observing several of these looks, "when you have trussed these three points, you shall tell me what is the matter, for I see you have something on your mind."

"I only wished to ask your Worship," said the Custrel, "if you had seen him; for he's lurking about here, like a blackbird under a cherry-tree."

"Seen who?" demanded the Knight.

"Why, the devil, your Worship," replied Longpole. "I've seen him twice."

"Indeed!" said Sir Osborne; "and pray what did his infernal highness say to you, when you did see him? or rather, what do you mean?"

"Why I mean, Sir," replied the other, "that I have seen Sir Payan Wileton twice here in the park during yesterday, if it was not his ghost; for he looked deadly pale, and I fancy I

could smell a sort of brimstony smell.—Now, I wot, a cunning priest would have told by the flavour whether 'twas purgatory half and half, or unadulterated hell—though, if he's not there, hell's empty."

"Hush!" said Sir Osborne; "speak not so lightly.—When was this?"

"The first time I saw him, Sir," answered the yeoman, "was yesterday in the forenoon, just after the justs, when I took a stroll out into the park with Mrs. Geraldine, the Lady Katrine's maid, for a little fresh air after the peck of dust I had broken my fast upon in the field. We had got, I don't know how, your Worship, into that lonely part under the hill, when beneath one of the trees hard by I saw Sir Payan, standing stock still, with his hand in the bosom of his doublet. His colour was always little better than that of a turnip, but now it looked like a turnip boiled."

"Did he speak to you?" demanded Sir Osborne; "or give any sign that he recognised you?"

"He did not speak," replied Longpole; "but when he saw me, he quietly slipped his hand out of the bosom of his doublet, and getting it down to the hilt of his poniard, kept fingering it with a sort of affectionate squeeze, as much as to say, 'dearly-beloved, how I should like to pluck you out of your leathern case, and furnish you with one of flesh and blood.'—He was ever fond of playing with his poniard, and when he spoke to you, if it were but of sousing a toast, he would draw it in and out of the scabbard all the time, as though he were afraid of losing the acquaintance, if he did not keep up the intimacy."

"You neither spoke, nor took any notice, I hope," said Sir Osborne.

"Oh no, your Worship," answered the Custrel; "I did not even give him *bon jour*, though he was fond of talking French to me when he wished to say something privately. I only twitched Mistress Geraldine over to the other side, and passed him by close; thinking to myself, if I see your dagger in the air, I'll go nigh to sweep your head off with my broad-sword, if I have to run to France for it: but seeing that I looked him in the face, he turned him round upon his heel, with a draw down of the corner of his mouth, which meant a great deal if it were rightly read."

"Ah! and what would be your translation thereof, good Longpole?" demanded his master.

"Why first, it meant—I hate you sufficiently to pretend to despise you. Then,—I'll murder you whenever I can do so,

safely; and again, it went to say—give my best love to your master, and tell him he'll hear more of me soon."

"By my faith, a good reading, and, I doubt not, a true one," replied the Knight; "but we must try and render his malice of no avail. And now, tell me when did you see him the second time?"

"The second time was after dinner, Sir," said Longpole, "when his Grace the King, yourself, and the Duke of Suffolk, kept the barriers against all comers."

"He did not try the field, did he?" demanded Sir Osborne.

"Oh no!" replied Longpole; "he stood looking on at a good distance, wrapped up in a cloak, so that it needed sharp eyes to recognise him; but I saw him all the time fix his eyes upon you like a cat before a mousehole, that I thought every minute to see him overspring the barrier and take you by the throat. Depend upon it, that good and honest Knight, like his German-cousin, Satan, never travels for any good, and we shall hear more of him."

"I doubt it not," answered Sir Osborne; "and we must guard against him. But now, Longpole, a word or two to you. —Did you give the packet, as I directed you, to Mistress Geraldine, Lady Katrine's woman?"

"I did your Worship," answered Longpole, somewhat surprised at the serious air that came over his Lord's countenance: "I [illegible] immediately I received it from your hands."

"That [illegible] replied Sir Osborne. "And now let me say to y[illegible]d Heartley, that I have remarked you often with this same girl Geraldine, and it seems to me that you are seeking her love."

"Oh, good now! your Worship," cried Longpole; "if you prohibit me from making love, it's all over with me.—Indeed, your worship, I could not do without it—It is meat, drink, and sleep to me—better than a stirrup cup when I rise in the morning, or a sleeping cup when I go to bed at night. 'Faith! I could not sleep without being in love. There, when I was with Sir Payan, where there was nothing to fall in love with but the portrait of his grandmother against the wall, I could not sleep o' nights at all, and was forced to take to deer stealing, just for amusement. Odds life! your Worship is hard on me. There, you have a bellyfull of love, all day long, from the highest ladies of the Court, and you would deny me as much as will lay in the palm of a serving woman."

"Nay, nay, Longpole," said Sir Osborne, laughing, "you have taken me up too hastily. All I meant to say was merely,

that seeing you are evidently seeking this poor girl's love, you must not play her false.—I do not wish to imply that you would wrong her virtue—of that I am sure you are incapable—but I mean, you must not win her love, and then leave her for another."

"Dear heart, no!" cried Longpole: "I would not for the world. Poor little soul, she has suffered enough! So I'm now consoling her, your Worship. It's wonderful how soon a broken heart is patched up with a little of the same stuff that broke it. It is the very reverse of piecing a doublet; for in love you mend old love with new, and it's almost as good as ever. However, some day soon we intend to ask your Worship's leave, and the priest's blessing, and say all those odd little words that tie two folks together."

"My leave and good wishes you shall have, Longpole," replied the Knight, "and all I can do to assist your purse.—Hark! is not that the trumpet to dinner? Give me my bonnet, I will down and dine at the board of estate to-day, as I was not there yesterday."

On descending to the hall, Sir Osborne was instantly assailed by a thousand questions respecting the accident which had befallen the King; for what between the diligent exertions of the attendants, and those of the surgeon, the news had already spread through the whole Court. In reply, the Knight gave as brief and exact an account of the whole occurrence as possible, endeavouring to stop the lying tongue of rumour by furnishing her with the truth at least. After dinner he returned to his own apartments, and only left them once for a momentary visit to Constance de Grey, remaining in hopes all the evening that the King might send for him when he arose.—Such hopes, however, were in vain: day waned and night fell, and the Knight's suit was no farther advanced than when Sir Cesar warned him to hasten it in the morning.

CHAPTER II.

A spirit fit to start into an empire
And look the world to law.

DRYDEN.

—— He, full of fraudful arts,
This well-invented tale for truth imparts.

DRYDEN.

We must now for a while change our place of action, and endeavour to carry the mind of the reader, from the sweeter and more tranquil scenes of Richmond Park, one of the most favoured residences of Henry the Eighth, to York-place, the magnificent dwelling of that pampered child of fortune, Cardinal Wolsey.

His progress, his power, and his fall; his arrogance, his splendour, and his vices; all the many changes that may be traced to his government of the realm, or to his artifices with the King; and of which to this day we feel the influence—changes, which, though beneficial in their effects, like many of our most excellent institutions, originated in petty passions, or egregious errors,—in short, all his vast faults, and his vast powers, have so often called the eyes of the world to the proud prelate, that he seems hardly one of those remote beings, which the cloud of past centuries has shadowed with misty indistinctness. His image, as well as his history, is familiar to the mind's eye. He lives, he moves, before us, starting out from the picture of the times of old, to claim acquaintance with our memory, as something more tangibly real, than the vague, undefined forms, that float upon the sea of history.—Such skilful pens also have depicted him in every scene and situation, that it becomes almost unnecessary, and perhaps, somewhat presumptuous, to say more concerning him, than that which strictly interweaves itself with the web of this tale.

York-place, which, as every one knows, was afterward called Whitehall, though it offered an appearance very different from the building at present known by that name, stood nearly on the same spot which it now occupies. Surrounded by splendid gardens, and ornamented with all that the arts of the day could produce, of luxurious or elegant, so far from

yielding in any degree to the various residences of the King, it surpassed them all in almost every respect. The combination also of ecclesiastical pomp, with the magnificence of a lay prince, created in the courts and round the gates of the palace a continual scene of glitter and brilliancy. Whether it was deputations from abbeys and monasteries—the visits of other bishops—the attendance of noblemen and gentlemen come to pay their court—the halt of military leaders with their armed bands, prepared for service and waiting for command—still bustle, activity, and splendour, were always to be met with in the open space before the building, on every morning when the fineness of the weather permitted such display. There, were to be seen passing to and fro, the rich embroidered robes of the clergy, in all the hues of green and purple, and of gold; the splendid liveries of the Cardinal's own attendants, and of the followers of his visiters, the white dresses of the soldiery, traversed with the broad red cross of England; the arms of the leaders, and the many coloured housings of the horses; while above the rest was often displayed the high wrought silver cross, or the glittering crook, of bishop or mitred abbot, borne among banners and penons and fluttering plumes.

It was on a morning when the scene before the palace was full of more than usual life, owing to the arrival of the Cardinal the night before from York, (which was, be it remarked, one day earlier than he had been expected,) that Sir Payan Wileton rode through the crowd to the grand entrance. He was followed by ten armed attendants, the foremost of whom were Cornish men, of that egregious stature which acquired for their countrymen in the olden time the reputation of sprouting out into giants. These two, Sir Payan had sent for expressly from his estates in Cornwall, not without a purpose; and now, having dressed them in splendid liveries, he gave orders for his train to halt at such a distance, as to be plainly visible from the windows of the Palace.

Dismounting from his horse at the door, he gave him to his page, and entering the hall, passed through the crowd of attendants with which it was tenanted, and mounted the grand staircase, with that sort of slow, determined step, which is almost always to be found in persons, whose reliance on their own powers of mind, is founded in long experience and success.

The number of people whom he met running up and down the wide staircase with various papers in their hands, announced at once the multitude of affairs which the Cardinal was obliged

to despatch after his long absence at York, and prognosticated some difficulty of obtaining an audience. Here, was a sandalled monk, slowly descending from what seemed some disappointed suit; there, a light courtier hurrying forward in fear of being too late; now, the glad look of a satisfied applicant; now, the vexed mien of one whose expectations were delayed: while ever between, the familiar servants of the place, glided to and fro on their various errands, passing coldly among that crowd of throbbing bosoms, as beings apart, whose feelings had no community with the hopes, the fears, the wishes, and all the thronged emotions which were then excited or destroyed.

Following one of these into the waiting-hall, at the top of the staircase, Sir Payan found it crowded almost to suffocation with persons staying for an audience, either from Wolsey himself or from one of his secretaries. Above their heads appeared a misty atmosphere of condensed human breath, and all around was heard the busy buzz of many voices murmuring in eager but whispered consultation.

The hall was a large chamber, cutting directly through the centre of the house, with a high gothic window at each end, to the right and left of which, at both extremities, appeared a door. The one opposite to that by which Sir Payan entered stood open, though a small wooden bar prevented the entrance of the crowd into the room beyond, which was occupied by six or seven ordinary clerks, busily employed in filling up various papers, and speaking from time to time to the persons who presented themselves on business. At each of the doors, at the other end, stood an usher with his rod, and a marshal with his staff, opposing the ingress of any but such as the highest rank, or personal interest, entitled to enter beyond the porch of the temple; for there, the right hand path led to the private chambers of Wolsey himself, and the left to the offices of his principal secretaries. It was round this left-hand door that the crowd took its densest aspect, for many who were hopeless of obtaining a hearing from the Cardinal himself, fondly flattered themselves that their plaint or petition might reach his ear through his secretary, if either by bribe or flattery they could secure the interest of the secondary great man.

Winding in and out through the meandering path left by the various groups in the hall, Sir Payan approached the door which led to the Cardinal's apartments, and demanded admission. There was something in his tone which implied right, and the usher said, that if he would give his name, he would

inquire; though an applicant who had remained long unlistened to, audibly murmured his indignation, and claimed to be admitted first.

Sir Payan turned to look at him while the usher was gone, and at once encountered the eyes of a near neighbour of his own, who, under his fostering care, had dwindled from a rich landholder to a poor farmer, and thence had sunk to beggary, while his possessions one by one had merged into the property of Sir Payan; which, like the Norwegian whirlpool, seemed to absorb every thing that came within its vortex. No sooner did the old man's eyes fall upon his countenance, and beheld who it was that still kept him from the light, than giving way to his rage, he clasped his hands, and stamping upon the ground, cursed him with the energy of despair.

Sir Payan cast upon him a cold look, mingled of pity and contempt, and passed through the door, which the usher now held open for his entrance. The room at which he arrived was a large ante-room, occupied by various groups of lords and gentlemen attached to the household of the Cardinal, who, prouder than royalty ever needs to be, would, at least, be equal with the King himself in the rank of his various officers. These were scattered about in various parts of the room, talking with the select visiters whom the Ushers had permitted to enter, or staring vacantly at the figures on the rich tapestry by which they were surrounded; wherein, though scrutinised a thousand times, they still found sufficient to occupy their idle eyes, while waiting till the Minister should go forth. With almost every one he saw, Sir Payan was in some degree acquainted; but in their bow of gratulation, as he passed, there was none of the frank, cordial welcome of regard or esteem; it was simply the acknowledgment of a rich and powerful man, whose only title to reverence was in his influence and his wealth.

About the centre stood Lord Darby, and to him Sir Payan approached with a "Good morrow, my good Lord."

"Sir!" said the Earl, looking him steadfastly in the face for a moment,—then, turning on his heel, he walked to the other end of the room. Nothing abashed, Sir Payan kept his ground, tracing the young Lord with his eyes, in which no very amicable expression was visible; and then, after a moment, he approached a small table, near the door of the minister's cabinet, whereat was seated a clerk, whom, as it so happened, Sir Payan himself had recommended to the Cardinal.

"Can his Grace be spoken with, Master Taylor?" demanded the Knight, as the clerk bowed low, at his approach.

"He is busied, honoured Sir," replied the man, with a second profound reverence, "in conversation with the Prior of his Abbey of St. Albans, on matters of deep importance—" a loud laugh from the chamber within reached Sir Payan's ear, through the door by which he stood, but he took no notice of this comment on the important business which Wolsey was transacting, and the clerk went on. "I am sorry to say, Sir, also, that there are five or six persons of distinction, who have waited on his Grace's leisure for near an hour."

"But the Cardinal sent for me," said Sir Payan; "and besides—" and he whispered something to his former servant which seemed convincing. In a minute or two after, the door opened, and the Prior of St. Albans issued forth. Rustling up to the table in his rich silk robes, he said to the clerk in a low and important voice, "His Grace commands you to send in the person of the highest rank that came next."

"Well, holy Father!" said the clerk rising; and then appearing to search the room with his eyes, he waited till the Prior was gone, when turning to Sir Payan, he added in a loud voice, "Sir Payan Wileton, the Lord Cardinal is waiting for you."

The Knight instantly proceeded to the door, which was opened by one of the Ushers who stood near, and passing on, he found himself directly in the presence of the Cardinal, who, seated in a chair of state, waited the next comer, with a countenance prepared to yield a good or bad reception, according to their rank and purpose.

He was, at that time, not apparently much above fifty-five, tall, erect, and dignified, with a face replete with thought and mind, and a carriage at once haughty and graceful. His dark eye was piercing and full of fire, and lurking about the corners of his mouth, might be seen the lines of unbounded pride, striven against and repressed, but still existing with undiminished force. The robes of bright scarlet satin, which he wore without any other relief than a tippet of rich sables, made his cheek look almost ashy pale, and the shade of the broad hat, which covered his brow, gave an air of pensive solemnity to his features, which, joined with the fire of his eye, the pride of his lip, and the knowledge of his power, invested his presence with a magnificence not devoid of awe.

As Sir Payan entered, Wolsey's brow gradually contracted into a frown, and fixing his glance full upon him, he let him

stand for several moments before he motioned him to a seat. At length, however, he spoke.

"Sir Payan Wileton," said he, "I have sent for you to speak on many subjects that may not be very agreeable for you to discuss. However, as they concern the welfare of society, and the fame of the King's justice, they must be inquired into; nor must any man's rank or wealth shelter him from the even eye of equity."

"Your Grace hardly does me justice," replied Sir Payan, resolving to keep to vague professions, till he had ascertained, as far as possible, what was passing in Wolsey's mind. "Had I been unwilling to discuss any part of my conduct with your Grace, should I have importuned your gates every day for the last week, in hopes of your return? and if, on the most minute investigation, I found any of my acts which would not meet the eye of equity itself, should I voluntarily present myself before the Cardinal of York?"

"You were sent for, Sir Payan," replied Wolsey. "Last night the messenger set out."

"By your Grace's pardon," said the Knight, "if you but calculate, you will find that I could not have come from a far part of Kent in so short a space of time.—It is true, that I have received the packet, but that was only by sending last night to know if you had then returned. My servant met your messenger at the very door, and received the letter intended to be sent to Chilham. But every day, as I have told your Grace, since I have risen from a bed of sickness, where a cross accident had thrown me, I have not ceased to seek your presence on business of some import."

Wolsey, long accustomed to encounter every species of wily art, was not to be led away by the exhibition of a new subject, and pursuing his first object, he proceeded.

"We will speak of that anon.—At present, it is my task to inform you, Sir, that various are the complaints, petitions, and accusations, against you, that daily reach my hand. And many prayers have been addressed to his Royal Grace the King, by the very best and noblest of the land, to induce him to re-establish the house of Fitzbernard in the lordship and estates of Chilham Castle. All these things have led me to inquire—as indeed is but my duty, as Chancellor of this kingdom—into the justice of your title to these estates, when I find that the case stands thus:—The Earl of Fitzbernard, in the last year of his late majesty's reign, was accused by those two infamous commissioners, Empson and Dudley, and was, upon the pre

mises, condemned to the enormous fine of one hundred thousand pounds, under the penal statutes; and as a still farther punishment, for some words lightly spoken, the King, then upon his death-bed, recalled the stewardship of Dover Castle, which, involved as was supposed the forfeiture of Chilham Castle and its lands—Was it not so?"

"It was so far, your Grace," replied Sir Payan; "but allow me to observe——"

"Hush!" said the Cardinal, waving his hand; "Hear me, and then your observations, if you please.—Such being the case, as I have said, and the wide Barony of Chilham supposed to be vacant—the stewardship of Dover Castle, with those estates annexed, is bestowed upon you—how or why, is not very apparent, though the cause alleged, is service rendered in the time of Perkyn Warbeck. Now it appears, from some documents placed in the hands of Lord Dacre, of the North, by the Duke of Buckingham, that Chilham Castle was granted to Fulbert de Douvre, at a period much subsequent to the grant of the Stewardship of Dover, that it was totally distinct, and held by tenure of chivalry, in fee and unalienable, except tunder attainder, or by breach of tenure.—What say you now, Sir Payan?"

"Why simply this, your Grace," replied Sir Payan boldly, "that the good Duke of Buckingham—the noble Duke of Buckingham as the Commons call him—seems to be nearly as much my good friend, as he is to the King his royal master, or to your Grace;" and, knitting his brow, and clenching his teeth, he fixed his eyes upon the rose in his shoe, remaining sternly silent, to let what he had said, and what he had implied, work fully on the mind of the Cardinal.

Wolsey's hatred to the princely Buckingham was well known, and Sir Payan easily understood that it was of that most maddening kind of hatred, called jealousy; so that not a word he had said, but was meeted to the taste and appetite of the Cardinal with a skilful hand. The Minister's cheek flushed while the Knight spoke, and when, after implying by tone, and look, and manner, that he could say more, Sir Payan suddenly stopped, and bent his eyes upon the ground: Wolsey had nearly burst forth in that impatient strain of question, which would have betrayed the deep anxiety he felt, to snatch at any accusation against his noble rival. Checking himself however, the politic churchman paused, and seemed to wait for some farther reply, till finding that Sir Payan still maintained his silent attitude of thought, he said, "Have you any

treason, Sir, to suppose that the Duke is ill-disposed towards his Grace the King?—of myself, I speak not. His envy touches me not, personally; but where danger shows itself towards our Royal Master, it becomes a duty to inquire—your insinuations, Sir Payan, were strong—you should be strongly able to support them."

"I know not, your Grace," replied the Knight, with the unhesitating daring that characterized all his actions, "how far a man's loyalty should properly extend; but this I know, that I am not the tame and quiet dog that fawns upon the hand that snatches its mess from before its muzzle. What I know, I know; what I suspect remains to be proved: but neither knowledge, nor suspicion, nor the clue to guide judgment through the labyrinth of wicked plotting, will I furnish to any one, with the prospect before my eyes of being deprived, for no earthly fault, of my rightful property, granted to me by the free will of our noble King Henry the Seventh."

An ominous frown gathered upon Wolsey's brow, and fain would he have possessed the thunder to strike dead the bold man who dared thus withhold the information that he sought, and oppose him in the plenitude of his power. "You are gifted with a strange hardihood, Sir," cried he, in a voice, the slight trembling of whose tone told the boiling of the soul within. "Did you ever hear of misprision of treason—Say?"

"I have, your Grace," replied Sir Payan, whose bold and determined spirit was not made to quail even before that of Wolsey. Acting, however, coolly and shrewdly, he was moved by no heat as the Cardinal; and though calculating exactly the strength of his position, he knew that it was far from his interest to create an enemy in the powerful Minister, who, sooner or later, would find means to avenge himself. At the same time, he saw that he must make his undisturbed possession of Chilham Castle, the price of any information he could give, or that he might both yield his secret and lose his land. —"I have heard your Grace," he said "of misprision of treason, but I know not how such a thing can affect me.—First, treason must be proved, and then it must be shown that it was concealed with full knowledge thereof. Doubts and suspicions, your Grace knows, are not within the meaning of the law."—Sir Payan paused, and Wolsey remained in silence, as if almost disdaining to reply. The Knight clearly saw what was passing in his mind, continued, after an affectation of thought, to give the appearance of sudden return of affectionate submission to what he was about to say.

"But why? your Grace, why?" cried he, "cast away from you one of your most faithful servants? Why must it be, when I have waited at your door, day after day, to give you some information, much for the state's and for your Grace's benefit to know—that the very first time I am admitted to your presence I find my zeal checked and my affection cooled, by an expression to deprive me of my estates?"

"Nay, [illegible]" said Wolsey, glad of an opportunity of yielding, without compromising either pride or dignity, "no such intention was [illegible]ged.—You have mistaken entirely—I only urged these reasons that you might know what had been urged to me; and I was about to put it to you what I could do, if the young Lord Darnley came over to this country and claimed these estates, for, probably, the old Earl will not have energy enough to make the endeavour. What could I do? I say."

"Let him proceed by due course of law, my Lord," replied Sir Payan; the calculation of whose mind was somewhat to the following effect, though passing more rapidly than it could when imbodied in words. "Before his claim is made in law (thought he), he shall taste of the axe of the Tower, or I am mistaken.—However, I will not let Wolsey know who he is, for then my interest in the business would be apparent, and I could claim no high recompense for ridding myself of my own enemy.—No, I will crush him as Osborne Maurice, a perfect stranger to me; then will my zeal seem great.—Pride will prevent him from owning his name till the death, and if he does own it, his coming here concealed, joined to the crimes that I will find means to prove against him, shall but make him appear the blacker." Such was the train of thought that passed instantly through his mind; while, with an affectation of candour, he replied, "let him proceed by due course of law, my Lord; then if he succeed, let him have it, in God's name.—All I ask is, that your Grace will not moot the question: for one word of the great Wolsey throws more weight into one or other of the scales of justice, than all the favour of a dozen kings."

Wolsey was flattered, but not deceived. However, it was his part not to see, at least for the time; and though he very well understood that Sir Payan would take special means to prevent the young Lord from seeking justice by law, he replied, "all that I could ever contemplate, Sir Payan, was to do even right to any one that should bring their cause before me. It is not for me to seek out occasions for men to plunge themselves in law; and be you very sure, that without the matter be

brought before me in the most regular manner, I shall never agitate the question—which is one, that even should it be discussed, would involve many, many difficulties. From what I say now, you may see, Sir, that your haste has hurried you into unnecessary disrespect, which, Heaven knows, I feel not as regards my person, but as it touches my office, I am bound to reprove you."

"Most deeply do I deplore it," replied Sir [redacted] if I have been guilty of any disrespect to one whom I reverence more than any other on the earth; but I think that the information which I have to communicate will at least be some atonement. I have then, my Lord," he proceeded, lowering his voice, "I have then discovered, by a most singular and happy chance, as dangerous a conspiracy as ever stained the annals of any European kingdom: and I hold in my hand the most irrefragable proofs thereof, together with the names of the principal persons, the testimony of several witnesses, which bear upon the subject, and various letters, which are in themselves conviction.—I will now, with your Grace's leave——"

At that moment one of the Ushers opened the door of the cabinet, and with a profound reverence, informed Wolsey that the Earl of Knolles desired to know when he could have an audience, as he had been waiting long without.

"Ha! What!" exclaimed the Cardinal, his eye flashing, and his lip quivering with anger at the interruption—"Am I to be disturbed each moment?—Tell him I cannot see him—I am busy—I am engaged—occupied on more important things. Were he a prince, I would not see him.—And you, beware how [redacted] intrude again.—Now, Sir Payan, speak on. This is ma[redacted] of moment, indeed. What was the object of this conspi[redacted]?"

"[redacted]thing less, I can conceive, my Lord, than to make the Commons dissatisfied with the government under which they live, to incite them to various insurrections, and, if possible, into general rebellion, under favour of which my Lord Duke of Buckingham might find his way to the throne; at least, there are fixed his eyes."

"Ha, ha! my proud Lord of Buckingham!" cried Wolsey, with a triumphant smile; "What! hast thou wired thine own feet? But you say you have proofs, Sir Payan. We must have full proof; but you are not a man to tread on unsteady ground—your proofs are sure?" he reiterated, with a feverish sort of anxiety, to ascertain that his great rival was fully in his power.

"In the first place, read that, my Lord," said Sir Payan, putting in his hand one out of a bundle of papers that he had brought with him. "That is the first step."

"Why, what is this?" cried Wolsey. "This is but the deposition of Henry Wilson, of Pencriton, in the duchy of Cornwall, who maketh oath and saith, that the prisoner Osborne Maurice, alias Sir Osborne Maurice, is the man whom he saw at the head of the Cornish miners, in insurrection, on the 3d of January last, and who incited them, by cries and words, to burn and destroy all that came in their way, till they should have satisfaction in every thing that they required: but for the farther acts of the said Osborne Maurice, he, the deponent, begs leave to refer to his former depositions, taken before Sir John Balham, Knight, of the city of Penzance, in Cornwall; only upon oath he declareth, that the said Osborne Maurice now present, is the ringleader or conductor of the mob, mentioned in his former deposition, in witness whereof ——Ha!" said Wolsey, thoughtfully, "there is one, I find, of this same name, Sir Osborne Maurice, who, during my absence, has crept into the King's favour.—Surely it may be the same!"

"On my life, my Lord, the very same," replied Sir Payan. "'Twas but the morning before last, that, at the justs at Richmond, I saw him with our noble King, his chosen companion, with the Duke of Suffolk, to keep the barriers against all comers: and there he ruffled it among the best, swimming, as 'twere, on the top of the wave."

"Then will we lay this on his head," said Wolsey, laying emphatically his forefinger on the paper, "and that shall sink him. But how does this touch the Duke of Buckingham?"

"Your Grace shall hear," replied Sir Payan. "This Wilson, who made the deposition you there hold, came to me one day in the last of March—you must know he is my bailiff—and told me a sad story of his woful plight, how in a cottage hard by he had met the man whom he had seen burn down his father's house in Cornwall, and who was here employed in the same devilish attempt, to instigate the peasants to revolt. Wilson, it seems, accused him; whereon, being a most powerful and atrocious traitor, he struck the bailiff to the ground, and left him for dead. This being sworn on oath before me, as a magistrate, I sent forth and had the villain arrested, after a most desperate struggle. With the intention of sending him to Cornwall, I had him committed to the strong room of the manor, but somehow, during the night, he contrived to escape through a window, and made his way to the Court—"

"But still, Sir Payan," interrupted the Cardinal, "this does not implicate the Duke of Buckingham, who, as I have good reason to believe, is but a scant lover of our royal King, and towards myself bears most inveterate malice—I have heard many a rumour of his plots and schemes—But it is proof, Sir Payan—it is proof that we must have!"

"And proof your Grace shall have," replied the Knight, counting the hatred that Wolsey bore towards the Duke as his own gain, and enjoying the inveteracy of his malice, not only with the abstract satisfaction of fellow-feeling, but as a fisherman delights to see the voracious spring of the trout at the fly he casts before his snout. "Let your Grace listen to me, for my story, though somewhat long, is nevertheless conclusive.—This Osborne Maurice, in his escape, left behind him the leather horsebags with which he rode when he was taken, and, in my capacity as magistrate, I made free to open them—"

"You did right, you did right," cried Wolsey, almost forgetting his dignity in eagerness. "What did you find? Say, Sir Payan! What did you find?"

"I found several letters from his Grace the Duke of Buckingham," answered Sir Payan, "being principally written to bring this Sir Osborne Maurice to the knowledge of persons about the Court, recommending him as one that *may be trusted*. Your Grace will mark those words, '*may be trusted.*' But among the rest was one, which shows for *what* he may be trusted. Behold it here, my Lord! You know the Duke's hand and style," and he presented the letter to Wolsey.

The Cardinal snatched it eagerly, but remembering himself, he turned more composedly to the address and read, "'Sir John Morton'—Ah!" cried he, "So! an old Perken Warbeckist!—the last I believe alive'—but for the contents;—'*Trusty and well-beloved friend*'—um—um—um—*everlasting friendship*'—of course, one traitor loves another—but let us see.—How! the daring villain! '*to inform you that before another year arrive, my head shall be the highest in the realm—at least so promises Sir Osborne Maurice, whose promises are not such as fail!*'—Ha, Sir Payan! ha! Did you read it? This is treason—is it not? By my life, the Duke's own hand!—But what says he farther. Ha! '*The butcher's cur Wolsey has long wanted the lash, and he shall have it soon.*' See you how rank is his malice; we will read no farther. This condemns him; and as for Sir Osborne Maurice, to-night he shall have his lodging in the Tower."

"Though other proof might be deemed superfluous," said

Sir Payan, "yet, my Lord, when I came to the part where he calls your Grace a butcher's cur," and the Knight dwelt maliciously on the words, "my zeal and affection for your Grace's service made me instantly resolve to track this Osborne Maurice on his journey, after escaping from prison. In person I could not do it, for a fall from my horse laid me in my bed for three weeks. But I took care that it should be done, and found that he returned straight to my Lord of Buckingham's, from thence he went to the Benedictine Abbey, at Canterbury, where he seems to have been sent to escort a Lady Katrine Bulmer to the Court. Then, passing by Rochester, he had an interview with the chief of the rioters at Hilham-green.—Your Grace will now be at no loss to know how, and by whom, that memorable tumult was instigated. There he pretended to save a good simple priest from the mob; but, by the clergyman's own account, they gave him up at a single word from this Maurice, which shows what was his influence with them, for they were the moment before about to hang the man they yielded so quietly after. The priest is at my lodging here. This was the traitor's last adventure before arriving at the Court; where, either by some sorcery, or other damned invention, he has bewitched the better-judgment of the King, so that none is so well loved as he. Perhaps he waits but an opportunity to put his dagger in our Royal master."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Wolsey. "We will instantly set off for Richmond. Without there! Let the barge be prepared directly; Sir Payan, you have saved the realm, and may claim a high reward."

"The reward I most affect," replied the Knight, in a well-acted tone of moderation, "is simply to remain in quiet possession of that which I have. Life is now wearing with me, your Grace, and I covet not greater charges than those which I enjoy. Let me but be sure of them."

"Rest tranquil on that point," replied Wolsey. "I will look thereto."

"There are, indeed," continued Sir Payan, "some hereditary estates, which, though they should be mine, are held by another; and on that score I may claim your Grace's assistance before I endeavour to recover them; for I put my whole actions in your Grace's hands, that, like a mere machine, I may move but as you please."

"What estates are these, Sir Payan?" demanded Wolsey, with something very near approaching to a smile, at the peculiar line of the Knights's cupidity. "If they be truly your's, doubt not but you shall have them."

"They are those estates in Cornwall," replied the Knight, "lately held by my cousin, the Earl de Grey, which have since passed to Constance, his daughter; though by all custom of succession, according to their tenure, I hold them to pass directly in the male line."

"Nay, nay, Sir Payan," cried Wolsey, with a curl of his lip: "this is too much! Constance de Grey is my ward, and shall not lose her estates lightly. She is, indeed,—" added he, thoughtfully, and speaking to himself more than to the Knight, though not a word was lost to his attentive ears—"She is, indeed, somewhat wilful. That letter, in which she refuses to wed her cousin, though calm and humble, was full of rank obstinacy. The fear of losing her estates, however—But we shall see.—Sir Payan, I must hold my opinion suspended till such time as you lay before me some proofs of the matter.—And now tell me—think you, in this plot of Buckingham's, is there any other person of high rank implicated?—Indeed there must be, for he would never undertake such daring schemes without some sure abettors.—Sir Payan, these Lords are all too proud. We must find means to humble them—it may be as well to let this arch traitor Buckingham proceed for some short time, till we find who are his accomplices. But for this Sir Osborne Maurice, he shall to the Tower to-night, for therein is the King's life affected."

"Might it not be better, in your Grace's good judgment," said Sir Payan, "to take the Duke's person at once; for assuredly, as soon as he hears that his minion is committed, he will become alarmed, and find his security in some foreign land."

"He shall be so well watched," said Wolsey, closing his hand tightly, as if he grasped his enemy, "that were he no larger than a meager ermine, he should not escape me;—No! we must let him condemn himself full surely. But, Sir Payan, are you prepared to accompany me to Richmond?"

"If by any chance this Maurice were to see me with your Grace," replied Sir Payan, "he would lose no time, but fly instantly, before you had speech of his Grace the King.—If you think it necessary, my Lord, that I should attend you, it may be well to arrest the traitor immediately on your arrival."

"Nay, nay, nay!" said Wolsey, shaking his head. "You know not Henry, Sir Payan—he is hard and difficult to rule, and were I to arrest Sir Osborne, would take for insult what was meant a service. But you shall not go—there is, indeed, no need—These papers are quite enough, with the testimony

of the priest—Let him be sent down post-haste to Richmond after me."

"He shall, my Lord," replied Sir Payan. "But one word more, your Grace.—If the Duke of Buckingham be condemned, his estates, of course, are forfeited to the Crown. Near me lies his beautiful manor of the Hill, in Kent, and I know your Grace will not forget your faithful servants." Wolsey paused, and Sir Payan went on. "To show how constantly present your Grace is to all my thoughts, you told me some time ago, that you desired to have two of the tallest men in the realm for porters of the gate. Cast your eyes through that window, my Lord, and I think you will see two that no prince in Europe can match in his hall."

No service that Sir Payan could have rendered, either to the state or to himself, would have given half so much pleasure to Wolsey as the possession of the two gigantic Cornishmen we have before mentioned, for among all his weaknesses, his passion for having tall men about him was one of the most conspicuous. As soon as, for a moment or two, he had considered them attentively through the window, and compared them with all the pigmy-looking race around, he thanked Sir Payan with infinite graciousness for his care; and hinted, though he did not promise, that Buckingham's manor in Kent might be the reward. While he yet spoke, a gentleman-usher entered, to announce that the barge was ready and giving some more directions to Sir Payan, in regard to sending the priest, Wolsey rose to proceed on his journey. The procession, without which he never moved, was already arranged in the antechamber, consisting of marshals and gentlemen ushers, with two stout priests bearing the immense silver crosses of his archbishopric and his legacy; and the moment he moved towards the door, the ushers pressed forward, crying, "On before, my lords and masters; on before!—Make way for the Lord Cardinal!—Make way for my Lord's Grace!—On before! on before!"

Wolsey immediately followed, and proceeded to his barge: while Sir Payan returned to his own house in Westminster, and despatched the priest to Richmond, after which he sat himself down to write. What he did write consisted of but a few lines, but they were of some import; and as soon as they were finished, he intrusted them to one of his shrewdest and most assured servants, with many a long direction, and [illegible] injunction to speed.

CHAPTER III.

This hour's the very crisis of your fate:
Your good or ill, your infamy or fame,
And all the colour of your life, depends
On this important *now*.

THE SPANISH FRIAR.

If any one will look in the almanac for the year 1520, they will find, marked opposite the 4th day of May, the following curious piece of information, "High-water at London-bridge at half-past three," and, if they calculate rightly, they will discover, that as Wolsey set out from what was then called the Cardinal's-bridge at high noon, he had the most favourable tide in the world for carrying him to Richmond. His rowers, too, plied their oars with unceasing activity, and his splendid barge, with its carved and gilded sides, cut rapidly through the water, but still not rapidly enough for his impatience.

Sitting under an awning, with a table before him, at which was placed a clerk, he sometimes read parts of the various papers that had been presented during the morning, and sometimes dictated to the secretary; but more frequently gave himself up to thought, suffering his mind to range in the wild chaos of political intrigue; which was to him like the labyrinth a man makes in his own garden, in which a stranger might lose his way, but where he himself walks for his ease and pleasure. Not that Wolsey's mind was one that soared above the pains of political life; for his were all the throbbing anxieties of precarious power, his all the irritation of susceptible pride and insatiable vanity, while jealous envy, avarice, and ambition, at once made the world a desert, and tormented him with unquenchable thirst.

No surer road to Wolsey's hatred existed than the King's favour; and since his return to London, though but one evening had passed, yet often had his heart rankled at hearing, from those who watched for him in his absence, that a young stranger, named Sir Osborne Maurice, had won the King's regard, and become the sharer of all his pleasures. The information given him by Sir Payan Wilcton had placed in his hand arms against this incipient rival, as he deemed him, which were sure to crush him; and with a sort of pride in the an-

quest he anticipated, he muttered to himself, as he saw the narrowing banks of the river, approaching towards Richmond, "Now, Sir Osborne Maurice, now!"

The boat touched the shore, and while the chief yeoman of the barge, as his privilege, supported the arm of the Cardinal. the two stout priests bearing the crosses hurried to land with the other attendants, and ranged themselves in order to proceed before him. Two of his running footmen sped on to announce his approach, and the rest, with the form and slowness of a procession, traversed the small space that separated them from the Court, reached the gate, and entering the palace, Wolsey. more like an equal prince than a subject, passed towards the King's privy-chamber, amid the profound bows and reverences of all the royal attendants, collected to do honour to his arrival.

Many had been the rumours in the palace during the morning respecting the King's health, and it was generally reported that the accident of the day before had thrown him into a fever. This, however, was evidently not the case, for a little before noon Sir Osborne Maurice had received a message by one of the royal pages, to the effect, that at three o'clock the King would expect him in his privy-chamber. That hour had nearly approached, and the young Knight was preparing to obey Henry's commands, when a note was put into his hands by Mrs. Margaret, the waiting woman of Lady Constance de Grey. It was a step which Sir Osborne well knew she would not have taken had it not been called for by some particular circumstance, and with some alarm he opened the paper, and read—

"*The Lord Cardinal is here—remember your promise. Tarry not rashly, if you love—Constance.*"

As Wolsey had been ever a declared enemy to his father, and a steady supporter of Sir Payan Wileton, Sir Osborne felt that the prospect was certainly in some degree clouded by his arrival; and while at the Court, he had heard enough of the jealousy that the favourite entertained towards all who often approached the King, to make him uneasy with regard to the future. But yet he could not imagine that the regard of Henry would be easily taken from him, nor the service he had rendered immediately forgotten; and strong in the integrity of his own heart, he would not believe that any serious evil could befall him; yet the warning of Sir Cesar still rung in his ears, and made an impression which he could not overcome.

It would be very easy to represent our hero as free from the failing and weakness, even from those of the age he lived

in—easy to make him as perfect as ever man was drawn, and more perfect than ever man was known—but then we should be writing a romance and not a true history. Sir Osborne was not perfect, and living in an age whose weakness it was to believe implicitly in judicial astrology, he shared in that weakness though but in a degree; and might, indeed, have shared still less, had not the very man who seemed to take such an interest in his fate acquired in the Court where he lived a general reputation for almost unerring perception of approaching events. No one that the young Knight met, no one that he heard of, doubted for a moment that Sir Cesar possessed knowledge superhuman—to have doubted of the possibility of acquiring such knowledge, would have been in those times a piece of skepticism, fully equal in criminality to doubting the sacred truths of religion: and therefore we cannot be surprised that he felt a hesitation, an uneasiness, a sort of presentiment of evil, as he approached the privy-chamber of the King.

At the door of the antechamber, however, he found stationed a page, who respectfully informed him that the King was busy on affairs of state with the Cardinal Lord Chancellor, and that his Grace had bade him say, that as soon as he was at leisure he would send for him to his presence.

Sir Osborne returned to his own apartment, and after calling for Longpole, walked up and down the room for a moment or two, while some curious vague feelings of doubt and apprehension passed through his mind.

"'Tis very foolish!" said he, at length: "and yet 'tis no harm to be prepared.—Longpole, saddle the horses, and have my armour ready.—'Tis no harm to be prepared," and quitting his own chambers, he turned his steps towards those of Lady Constance, which here, not like the former ones in the palace at Greenwich, were situated at the other extremity of the building. His path led him again past the royal lodgings, and as he went by, Sir Osborne perceived that the page gave entrance to a priest, whose figure was in some degree familiar to his eye. Where he had seen him he did not know, but, however, he stayed not to inquire, and proceeded onward to the door of Lady Constance's apartments. One of her women gave him entrance, and he soon reached her sitting-chamber, where he found her calmly engaged in embroidery. But there, also, was good Dr. Wilbraham, who of late had shrewdly begun to suspect a thing that was already more than suspected by half the Court, namely, that Sir Osborne Maurice was deeply in love with Constance de Grey, and that the Lady was

in no degree insensible to his affection. Now, though the good Doctor had thought in the first instance that Lady Constance's marriage with Lord Darby would be the very best scheme on earth, he now began to think that the present arrangement would be a great deal better; his reasoning proceeding in the very inverse of Wolsey's, and leading him to conclude, that as Lord Darby had quite enough of his own, it would be much better for Lady Constance to repair, with her immense wealth, the broken fortunes of the ancient house of Fitzbernard, and at the same time secure her own happiness by marrying the best and the bravest of men. Notwithstanding all this, he could not at all comprehend, and never for a moment imagined, that either Constance or her lover might in the least wish his absence, and therefore, with great satisfaction at beholding their mutual love, he remained all the time that Sir Osborne dared to stay, and conducted him to the door with that affectionate respect which he always showed towards his former pupil. While the old clergyman stood bidding Sir Osborne farewell, a man habited like a yeoman approached, inquiring for the lodging of Lady Constance de Grey, and on being told that it was before him, he put a folded note into the hands of Dr. Wilbraham, begging him to deliver it to the Lady, which the chaplain promised to do, and the man departed.

And now, leaving the good Clergyman to perform this promise, and Sir Osborne to return to his apartment, somewhat mortified at not having had an opportunity of conversing privately with Constance, even for a moment, we will steal quietly into the privy-chamber of the King, and seating ourselves on a little stool in the corner, observe all that passes between him and his Minister.

"God save your royal Grace!" said Wolsey, as he entered, "and make your people happy in your long and prosperous reign."

"Welcome back again, my good Lord Cardinal," replied the King; "you have been but a truant of late. We have in many things wanted your good counsel. But your careful letters have been received, and we have to thank you for the renewed quiet of the West Riding."

"Happily, your Grace, all is now tranquil," replied the Cardinal, "and the kingdom within itself blessed with profound peace: but yet, my Lord, even when this was accomplished, it was necessary to discover the cause and authors of the evil, that the fire of discord and sedition might be [illegible] extinguished, and not, being only smothered, burst out [illegible]

where we least expected it. This has been done, my liege.—The authors of all these revolts, the instigators of their fellow-subjects' treason, have been discovered, and if your Grace have leisure for such sad business, I will even now crave leave to lay before you the particulars of a most daring plot, which, through the activity of good Sir Payan Wileton, I have been enabled to detect."

"Without there!" cried the King, somewhat impatiently. "See that we are not interrupted. Tell Sir Osborne Maurice that we will send for him when we are free. Sit, sit, my Wolsey!" He continued, "Now, by the holy faith, it grieves me to hear such things! I had hoped that tranquillity being restored, I should have sped over to France to meet my royal brother Francis, with nothing but joy upon my brow. However, you are thanked, my good Lord, for your zeal, and for your diligence. We must not let the poisonous root of treason spread, lest it grow too great a tree to be hewn down.—Who are these traitors, ha? Have you good proof against them?"

"Such proof, my liege, that however willing I might be to doubt, uncertainty, the refuge of hope, is denied me, and I must needs believe. When we have nourished any thing with our grace, fostered it with kindly care, taught it to spread and become great, heaped it with favours, loaded it with bounty, we naturally hope that, having sowed all these good things, our crop will be rich in gratitude and love; but, sorry I am to say, that your Grace's royal generosity has fallen upon a poisoned soil, and that Edward Duke of Buckingham, who might well believe himself the most favoured man in the realm, now proves himself an arrant traitor."

"By Heaven!" cried the King, "I have lately much doubted of his loyalty. He has, as you once before made me observe, much absented himself from the Court, keeping, as I hear, an almost royal state in the counties; and lately, on the pretence that he is sick, that his physicians command him quiet, he refuses to accompany us to G isnes—I fear me, I fear me, that 'tis his loyalty is sick. But let me hear your reasons, my good Lord Cardinal. Fain would I still behold him with an eye of favour; for he is in many things a noble and a [illegible] peer, and by nature richly endowed with all the shining qualities both of the body and the mind. 'Tis sad! indeed 'tis sad, that such a man should fall away, and lose his high renown!—But your reasons, Wolsey. Give me the history!"

It [illegible] needless in this place to recapitulate all that was

have seen, in the last chapter, advanced by Sir Payan Wileton, to criminate the Duke of Buckingham. Suffice it, that Wolsey related to the King the very probable tale that had been told him by the Knight; namely, that Buckingham, aspiring to the throne, affected an undue degree of popularity with the Commons, and by his secret agents rendered them dissatisfied with the existing Government, exciting them to various tumults and revolts, of which he cited many an instance; and that still farther, he had contrived to introduce one of the most active agents of his treason into the Court, and near to the King's own person.

"Who do you aim at?" cried the King. "Quick! give me his name; I know of no such person. All about me are men of trust."

"Alas! no, my liege," answered Wolsey: "the man I mean calls himself Sir Osborne Maurice."

"Ha!" cried Henry, starting—and then, after thinking for a moment, he burst into a fit of laughter. "Nay, nay, my good Wolsey," he said, shaking his head; "Nay, nay, nay, Sir Osborne saved my life no longer ago than yesterday, which looks not like treason," and he related to the Cardinal the accident that had befallen him while hawking.

Wolsey was somewhat embarrassed, but he replied, "We often see that, taken by some sudden accident, men act not as they proposed to do; and there is such a nobility in your Grace's nature, that he must be a hardened traitor indeed who could see you in danger, and not by mere impulse hasten to save you. Perhaps such may have been the case with this Sir Osborne, or perhaps his master's schemes may not yet be ripe for execution; at all events, my Liege, doubt not that he is a most assured traitor."

"I cannot believe it!" cried Henry, striking the table with his hand. "I will not believe it! By Heaven, the very soul of honour sparkles in his eye! But your proofs, Lord Cardinal! Your proofs! I will not have such things advanced against my faithful subjects, without full and sufficient evidence."

The more eagerness that Henry showed in defending his young friend, the more obnoxious did Sir Osborne become to Wolsey, and he laid before the King, one by one, the deposition of Wilson, Sir Payan's bailiff, several letters which Buckingham had written in favour of the young Knight, and lastly, the Duke's letter to Sir Thomas Morton, where, either by a forgery of Sir Payan Wileton's, or by some strange chance, it

appeared that Sir Osborne Maurice had promised that within a year the Duke's head should be the highest in the realm.

While he read, Henry's brow knit into a heavy frown, and. biting his lip, he went back to the beginning, and again read over the papers. "Cardinal," said he, at length, "bid the page seek Pace, my secretary, and ask him for the last letter from the Duke of Buckingham."

Wolsey obeyed; and, while waiting for the return of the page, Henry remained, with his eyes averted, as if in deep thought, beating the papers with his fingers, and gnawing his lip in no very placable mood, while the Cardinal wisely abstained from saying a word, leaving the irritation of the King's mind to expend itself, without calling it upon himself. As soon as the letter was brought, Henry laid it side by side with those that Wolsey had placed before him, and seemed to compare every word, every syllable, to ascertain the identity of the hand-writing. "True! by my life!" cried he, casting down the papers: "The writing is the same; and now, my Lord Cardinal, what have you farther to say? Are there any farther proofs, ha?"

"Were there none other, your Grace," replied Wolsey, "than the Duke's hand-writing, and the deposition of a disinterested and respectable witness, who can have no enmity whatever against this Sir Osborne Maurice, and who probably never saw him, but on the two occasions that he mentions, I think it would be quite sufficient to warrant your Grace in taking every measure of precaution. But there is another witness, whom, indeed, I have not seen, but who can give evidence, I understand, respecting the conduct of the person accused, towards the Rochester rioters. Knowing how much your Grace's wisdom passeth that of the best in the realm, I have dared to have this witness (a most honourable priest) brought hither, hoping that the exigency of the case might lead you to examine him yourself, when, perhaps, your royal judgment may elicit more from him than others could do."

"You have done wisely, my good Lord Cardinal," replied Henry, whose first irritation had now subsided. "Let him be called, and bid your secretary take down his deposition, for 'tis not fitting that mine be so employed."

At the command of Wolsey, one of the pages went instantly to seek the Priest, who, by the care and despatch of Sir Payan, had been sent down with all speed, and was now waiting with the Cardinal's attendants, in no small surprise and agitation, *not being* able to conceive why he was thus hurried from one

place to another, and breathing also with some degree of alarm in the unwonted atmosphere of a Court. On being ushered into the royal presence, the worthy man fell down upon both his knees before Henry, and clasping his hands, prayed for a blessing on his head, with such fervour and simplicity, that the Monarch was both pleased and amused.

"Rise, rise, good man!" said the King, holding out his hand for him to kiss: "we would speak with you on a business of import. Nay, do not be alarmed. We know your worth, and purpose to reward you.—Place yourself here, master Secretary, and take down his replies. Sit, my good Lord Cardinal; we beg you to be seated." As soon as Wolsey had taken a low seat near the King, and the Secretary, kneeling on one knee before the table, was prepared to write, Henry again proceeded, addressing the Priest, who stood before him, the picture of a disquieted spirit.

"Say, do you know one Sir Osborne Maurice?" demanded the King.

"Yes, surely, please your royal Grace," replied the Priest. "At least, that was the name which his attendants gave to the noble and courageous Knight that saved me from the hands of the Rochester shipwrights."

"First," said Wolsey, "give us your name, and say how you came to fall into the hands of these rebellious shipwrights."

"Alas, your Grace," answered the Priest; "I am a poor Priest of Dartford, my name John Timeworthy, and hearing that these poor misguided men at Rochester were in open rebellion against the Government, from lack of knowledge and spiritual teaching, I resolved to go down among them and preach to them peace and submission. I will not stay to say how, and where, I found them; but getting up, upon a bench that stood hard by, under an apple-tree, I gathered them round me like a flock of sheep, and began my discourse, saying—Wo! wo! wo! Wo unto ye, shipwrights of Rochester, that you should arm yourselves against the King's Grace. You are like children, that must fain eat hot pudding, and burn their mouths withal; for ye will cry, and ye will cry, till the sword fall upon you, and then, when Lord Thomas comes down with his men-at-arms, ye will turn about and fly; and the spears will stick in your hinder parts, and ye shall be put to shame: for though he have but hundreds, and ye have thousands, his are all men of the bow and of the spear, and ye know no more of either than a jackass does of the harp and psaltery. And thereupon, your Grace, they that I took for strayed sheep,

showed themselves to be a pack of ravening wolves; for they took me down from the bench, and beat me unmercifully, and putting a halter round my neck, led me along to hang me up, as they vowed, in sight of Rochester Castle: when just as they were dragging me along, more dead than alive, across a little green, the Knight Sir Osborne Maurice came up, and, as I said, rescued me: and for a surety he is a brave and generous Knight, and well deserving your Grace's favour."

"By my faith, I have always thought so," said Henry. "What say you now, Cardinal? Question him yourself, man."

Wolsey eagerly snatched at the permission, for he plainly saw that the matter was not proceeding to his wish. "Pray, my good Master Timeworthy," said he, "how was it that this Sir Osborne rescued you? Did he put his lance in rest, and charge the whole multitude, and deliver you from their hands?"

"Not so! not so!" cried the Priest. "He did far more wisely, for there would have been much blood spilt; but he sent forward one, who seemed to be his shield-bearer, who shook hands with the chief of the rioters, and spoke him fair; and then the Knight came forward himself, and spoke to him; and the chief of the rioters cried with a loud voice to his people, that this was not Lord Thomas, as they had thought, but a friend, and well-beloved of the good Duke of Buckingham; and it was wonderful how soon the eloquence of that young man worked upon the multitude, and made them let me go. He was, indeed, a youth of a goodly presence, and fair to look upon, and had something noble and commanding in his aspect; and his words moved the rioters in the twinkling of an eye, and made them wholly change their purpose."

Henry's brow, which had cleared during the former part of the Priest's narration, now grew doubly dark and cloudy; and he muttered to himself, "Too clear! too clear!" While Wolsey proceeded to question the Priest more closely.

"Indeed, your Grace," replied he, in answer to the Cardinal's more minute questions, "I can tell you no more than I have told; for, as I said, I was more dead than alive all the time, till they gave me up to the Knight, and did not hear half that passed."

"And what did you remark after you were with the Knight?" demanded Wolsey. "Was there no particular observation made on the whole transaction?"

"Not that I can call to mind," answered the Priest. "All I remember is, that they seemed a very merry party; and laughed and joked about it; which I, being frightened, thought

almost wicked, God forgive me! for it was all innocency, and high blood of youth."

"Well, Sir," said Wolsey, "you may go. Go with him, Secretary; and see that he be well tended, but allowed to have speech of no one."

The Priest and the Secretary withdrew in silence; and no sooner were they gone, than, abandoning his kingly dignity, Henry started from his seat, and strode up and down the room in one of those fits of passion which, even then, would sometimes take possession of him. At length, stopping opposite Wolsey, who stood up the moment the King rose, he struck the table with his clenched hand, "He shall die!" cried he. "By Heaven, he shall die! Let him be attached, my Wolsey."

"My sergeant-at-arms is with me, your Grace," replied the Cardinal, "and shall instantly execute your royal will. Better arrest him directly, lest he fear and take flight."

"Whom mean you?" cried the King. "Ha! I say, attach Edward Bohun, Duke of Buckingham."

"In regard to the Duke of Buckingham, my liege," replied Wolsey, less rudely than he had before spoken, "will you take into your royal consideration, whether it may not be better to suffer him to proceed awhile with his treasonous schemes; for I question if the evidence we have at present against him would condemn him with the peers."

"But he is a traitor," cried Henry, "an evident traitor, and, by my faith, shall suffer a traitor's death."

"Most assuredly he is a black and heinous traitor," answered Wolsey. "And yet your Grace will think what a triumph it would be for him, if his peers should pronounce him innocent. He has store of friends among them. Far better let him proceed yet awhile, and, with our eyes upon him, watch every turn of his dark plot, and seize him in the midst, when we shall have such proof, that even his kindred must, for very shame, pronounce his guilt. In the mean time, I will ensure that he be so strictly guarded that he shall have power to do no evil."

"You are right, my Wolsey, you are right," cried the King, seating himself, and laying his hand upon the papers, "let it be conducted as you say. But see that he escape not, for his ingratitude adds another shade to what is black itself. As to this Sir Osborne Maurice, 'tis a noble spirit perverted by that villain Buckingham; I have seen and watched the seeds of many virtues in him."

"It must be painful, then, for your Grace to command his

arrest," said Wolsey; "and yet he is so near your royal person, and his treason is so manifest, that the very love of your subjects requires that he should suffer death."

"And yet," replied Henry, fixing his eye upon the Cardinal, and speaking emphatically, "And yet, even now I feel the warm blood of the English Kings flowing lightly in my veins, which but for him would have been cold and motionless—and shall I take his life that has saved mine? No, Wolsey, no! It must not be! He has been misled, but is not wicked."

"Still, your Grace's justice requires," said Wolsey, "(pardon me my boldness,) that he should undergo his trial. Then, if condemned, comes in your royal mercy to save him; saying to him, you are judged for having been a traitor, you are pardoned for having saved your King."

"But be assured, my Wolsey," replied Henry, "that if his trial were to take place now, the great traitor Buckingham will take alarm, and either endeavour to do away all evidence of his treason, or take to flight and shelter himself from justice."

"No need that his trial be immediate," answered the Cardinal; "if your Grace permits, he shall be committed privately to the Tower, and there await your return from France; by which time, depend on it, the Duke of Buckingham will have given farther tokens of his mad ambition, and both may be tried together. Then let the greater traitor suffer, and the less find grace, so that your royal justice and your clemency be equally conspicuous."

"Be it so, then," said the King; "though in truth, good Cardinal, it grieves me to lose this youth. He is, without exception, the lance in Christendom, and would have done our realm much credit in our journey to France—I say it grieves me! Ay, heartily it grieves me!"

"Nay, your Grace," said Wolsey, "you will doubtless find a thousand as good as he."

"Not so! not so, Lord Cardinal!" cried Henry; "these are things not so easily acquired as you churchmen think. I never saw a better Knight. When his lance breaks in full course, you shall behold his hand as steady as if it held a straw—nor knee, nor thigh, nor heel shall shake; and when the toughest ash splinters upon his casque, he shall not bend even so much as a strong oak before a summer breeze. But his guilt is clear, so the rest is all nought."

"Then I have your Grace's command," said Wolsey, "to commit him to the Tower. He shall be attached directly by the sergeant-at-arms, and sent down by the turn of the tide."

"Hold, hold!" cried the King; "not to-night, good Wolsey. Before we fly our hawk, we cry the heron up, and he shall have the same grace. To-morrow, if he be still found, arrest him where you will: but for to-night he is safe, nor must his path be dogged. He shall have free and fair start, mark me, till to-morrow at noon; then slip your greyhounds on him, if you please."

"But, your Grace," cried Wolsey, "if you let him——"

"It is my will," said the King, his brow darkening—"Who shall contradict it? Ha! See that it be obeyed exactly, Lord!"

"It shall, your Grace," said Wolsey, bending his head with a profound inclination. "Your will is law to all your faithful servants; but only let your noble goodness attribute to my deep love for your royal person, the fear I have that this traitorous agent of a still geater traitor may be tempted in despair, if he find that he is discovered, to attempt some heinous crime against your Grace."

"Fear not, man! fear not!" replied the King. "He, that when he might have let me die, risked his own life to save mine will never arm his hand against me—I fear not, Cardinal. So be you at ease. But return to London; see that Buckingham be closely watched; and be sure that no preparation be wanting for the meeting with Francis of France. Be liberal, be liberal, Lord Cardinal! I would not that the nobles of France should say they had more gold than we.—Let every thing be abundant, be rich, and in its flush of newness; and as to Sir Osborne Maurice, arrest him to-morrow, if he be still here—Let him be fairly tried, and if he come out pure, well! Yet still, if he be condemned, his own life shall be given him as a reward for mine. However, till to-morrow let it rest. It is my will!"

Though Wolsey would have been better pleased to have had the Knight safely in the Tower, yet even in case of his making his escape before the next morning, his great object was gained, that of banishing from the Court for ever, one whose rapid progress in the King's regard bade fair, with time, to leave every one behind in favour. He therefore ceased to press the King upon the subject, especially as he saw, by many indubitable signs, that Henry was in one of those imperious moods which would bear no opposition. A few subjects of less import still remained to be discussed, but the monarch bore these so impatiently, that Wolsey soon ceased to importune him upon them, and resolving to reserve all farther business for some more auspicious day, he rose, and taking leave with one

of those refined, yet high-coloured compliments, which no man was so capable of justly tempering as himself, he left the royal presence, and proceeded to another part of the palace on business, whose object is intimately allied to the present history, as we shall see hereafter.

CHAPTER IV.

> And knowing this, should I yet stay,
> Like such as blow away their lives
> Enamoured of their golden gyve?—BEN JONSON.
>
> Away! though parting be a fretful corrosive,
> It is applied to a deathful wound.—SHAKSPEARE.

WHO would be a king, if they could help it? When Wolsey had left him, Henry once more raised the papers which lay upon the table, and read them through; then leaned his head upon his hand, and passed some moments in deep and frowning meditation. "No!" said he, "no! I will not show them to him, lest he warn the traitor Buckingham. Ho, without! Tell Pace to come to me," and again falling into thought, he remained musing over the papers, with bent brows, and an absent air, till the secretary had time to obey his summons. On his approach, the good but timid Pace almost trembled at the angry glow he saw upon the King's face; but he was relieved by Henry placing in his hands the papers, which Wolsey had left, bidding him have good care thereof.

Pace took the papers in respectful silence, and waited an instant to see whether the King had farther commands; but Henry waved his hand, crying, "begone! leave me! and send the page."

The page lost not a moment in appearing; for the King's hasty mood was easily discernible in his aspect, and no one dared, even by an instant's delay, to add fuel to the fire which was clearly burning in his bosom; but still Henry allowed him to wait for several minutes. "Who waits in the antechamber?" demanded he, at length.

"Sir Charles Hammond, so please your Grace," replied the page.

"And where is Denny?" asked the King. "Where is Sir Anthony Denny, ha?"

"He has been gone about an hour, your Grace," replied the page.

"They hold me at naught!" cried Henry. "Strike his name from the list! By my life, I will teach him to wait!—Go call Sir Osborne Maurice to my presence," and rising from his seat, he began again to pace the apartment.

The page, as he conducted the young Knight to the hall in which Henry awaited him, took care to hint that he was in a terrific mood, with that sort of eagerness which all vulgar people have to spread evil tidings. The Knight, however, asked no question, and made no comment; and passing through the door which he had seen give admission to the priest about an hour before, he entered the antechamber, in which was seated Sir Charles Hammond, who saluted him with a silent bow. Proceeding onward, the page threw open the door of the privy-chamber, and Sir Osborne approached the King, in the knitting of whose brow, and the curling of whose lip, might be plainly seen the inward irritation of his impetuous spirit. As he came near, Henry turned round, and fixed his eye upon him; and the Knight, not knowing what might be the cause, or what the consequence of his anger, bent his knee to the ground, and bowing his head, said, "God save your Grace!"

"Marry, thou sayest well!" cried Henry. "We trust he will, and guard us ever against traitors! What say you? ha?"

"If ever there be a man so much a traitor to himself," replied Sir Osborne, "as to nourish one thought against so good a King, oh, may his treason fall back upon his own head, and crush him with the weight."

"Well prayed again," said Henry, more calmly. "Rise, rise, Sir Osborne, we must speak together. Give me your arm.—We cannot sit and speak when the heart is so busy.—We will walk. This hall has space enough," and with a hurried pace, he took one or two turns in the chamber, fixing his eyes upon the ground, and biting his lip in silence. "Now, by our Lady," cried he, at length, "there are many men in this kingdom, Sir Osborne Maurice, who, seeing us here, holding your arm, and walking by your side, would judge our life in peril."

Sir Osborne started, and gazed in Henry's face with a look of no small surprise.

"Did I but know of any one," said he, at length, "who could poison your royal ear with such a tale, were it other than

a churchman or a woman, he should either confess his falsehood, or die upon my sword.—But your Grace is noble, and believes them not.—However," he continued, unbuckling his sword and laying it on the table as far away as possible—"on all accounts I will put that by. There lays the sword that was given me by an Emperor, and here is the hand that saved a King's life,—and here," he continued, kneeling at the King's feet, "is a heart as loyal as any in this realm, ready to shed its best blood if its King command it.—But tell me, only tell me, how I have offended."

"Rise, Sir Knight," said the King. "On my life, I believe you so far, that if you have done wrong, you have been misled; and that your heart is loyal, I am sure—yet listen. You came to this Court a stranger; in you I found much of valour and knightly worth—I loved you, and I favoured you; yet now I find that you have in much deceived me.—Speak not, for I will not see in you any but the man who has saved my life; I will know you for none other.—Say, then, Sir Osborne, is not life a good return for life—is it? ha?"

"It is, my Liege," replied Sir Osborne, believing his real name discovered. "Whatever I have done amiss has been but error of judgment, not of heart, and surely cannot be held as very deep offence in eyes so gracious as my noble King's."

"We find excuses for you, Sir, which rigorous judges might not find," replied the Monarch; "yet there are many who strive to make your faults far blacker than they are, and doubtless may urge much against you; but hitherto we stand between you and the law, giving you life for life. But see you use the time that is allowed you well, for to-morrow, at high noon, issues the warrant for your apprehension, and if you make not speed to leave this Court and country—your fate upon your head, for you have warning."

Sir Osborne was struck dumb, and for a moment he gazed upon the King in silent astonishment. "I know not what to think," he cried, after a while; "I cannot believe that a King, famous for his clemency, can see in my very worst crime aught but an error. Your Grace has said that many strive to blacken me, still humbly at your feet let me beseech you to tell me of what they do accuse me?"

"Of many rank offences, Sir!" replied the King, somewhat impatiently; "offences of which you might find it hard to wash yourself so clear, as not to leave enough to weigh you down. However, 'tis our will that you depart the Court, without farther sojourn; and if you are wise, you'll speed to leave a country where

you may chance to find worse entertainment and a harder lodging if you stay. Go to the keeper of our privy purse, who will give a thousand marks to clear your journey of all cost; and God befriend you for the time to come."

"Nay, your Grace," replied Sir Osborne; "poor as I came, I'll go; but thus far richer, that for one short month, I won a great King's love, and lost it without deserving; and if to this your Grace will add the favour to let me once more kiss your royal hand, you'll send me grateful forth."

Henry held out his hand towards him. "By my faith," cried he, "I do believe him honest.—But the proofs! the proofs! Go, go, Sir Osborne—I judge not harshly of you. You have been misled—but fly speedily, I command you—for your own sake fly."

Sir Osborne raised himself, took his sword from the table, and with a low obeisance to the King quitted the room, his heart far too full to speak with any measure what he felt.

His hopes all broken, his dream of happiness dispelled, like a wreath of morning mist in the sunshine, the young Knight sought his chamber, and casting himself in a seat, leaned his head upon his hands, in an attitude of total despondency. He did not think, for the racking images of despair that hurried through his brain, were very different to the defined shapes of the most busy thought. His bosom was a chaos of dark and gloomy feelings, and it was long before reason lent him any aid to arrange and disentangle his ideas. As it did so, however, the thought of whither he should fly presented itself; and his first resolution was to go to his father in Wales; but then, to be the bearer of such news—it was more than he could undertake. Besides, as he reflected, he saw, that, use what speed he might, his course would be easily tracked in that direction, and that the facilities which the messengers of the Government possessed of gaining fresh horses, would soon enable them to overtake and arrest him, if the warrant was issued the next day at noon, as the King had said, and followed up with any degree of alacrity. That it would be so he had no reason to doubt, attributing, as he did, the whole of his misfortune to the hatred and jealousy of Wolsey; whose haste to ruin him had been sufficiently evinced, by his having begun and completed it within one day after his arrival from York. These thoughts brought on others, and not knowing the stinging impulse of a favourite's jealousy, he pondered over the malice of the Cardinal, wondering whether in former days his father might have offered the then rising Minister either offence or injury, and thus entailing his evil

offices on himself and family. But still the question, whither he should fly, returned, and after much consideration, he resolved that it should be to Flanders, once more to try the fortune of his sword; for though peace nominally subsisted between the French King and the new Emperor, it was a peace which could be but of short duration, and was even then interrupted by continual incursions upon each other's territories, and incessant violation of the frontier by the various garrisons of France and Burgundy. Once arrived, he would write, he thought, to his father, who would surely join him there, and they would raise their house and name in a foreign land. But Constance de Grey—could she ever be his? He knew not; but at her very name, Hope relighted her torch, and he began to dream again.

As he thought thus, he raised his eyes, and perceived his faithful attendant Longpole watching him with a look of anxious expectation, waiting till his agitated reverie should end. "How! Longpole!" said he. "You here? I did not hear you come in."

"I have been here all the time, your Worship," replied the yeoman. "And I've made some noise in the world, too, while you have been here, for I let all the armour fall in that closet."

"I did not hear you," said the Knight. "My thoughts were very busy.—But, my good Heartley, I am afraid the time is come that we must part.

"By my faith, it must be a queer time then, your Worship," answered Longpole: "for it is not every-day weather that will make me quit you—specially when I see you in such a way as you were just now."

"But, my good Longpole," answered the Knight, "I am ruined. The King has discovered who I really am, Wolsey has whetted his anger against me, and he has banished me his Court, bidding me fly instantly, lest I be to-morrow arrested, and, perhaps, committed to the Tower. I must therefore quit this country without loss of time, and take my way to Flanders, for my hopes here are all at an end—Wolsey is too powerful to be opposed."

"Well then, my Lord," said Longpole—"I will call you by your real name now—and so I'll go and saddle our horses, pack up as much as I can, and we'll be off in a minute."

"But, my good Longpole," said his master, "you do not think what you are doing. Indeed you must not leave your country and your friends, and that poor girl Geraldine, to follow

a man ruined in fortune and expectations, going to travel through strange lands, where he knows not whether he may find friends or enemies."

"More reason he should have a companion on the road," replied Longpole. "But, my Lord, my determination is made. Where you go, there will I go too; and as to little mistress Geraldine, why, when we've made a fortune, which I am sure we shall do, I'll make her trot over after me. But, as I suppose there is but little time to spare, I will go get every thing into order as fast as possible. *Carpe diem*, as good Dr. Wilbraham used to say to me when I was lazy.—There is your Lordship's barness. If you can manage to pop on the breast and back pieces, I will be back directly."

"Nay," said the Knight, "there is yet one person I must see. However, be not long, good fellow, for I shall not stay. Give me that wrapping cloak with the hood."

Longpole obeyed, and enveloping himself in a large mantle, which he had upon a former occasion used to cover his armour, in one of those fanciful justs where every one appeared disguised, the Knight left his own apartments, and proceeded to those of Lady Constance de Grey. Many were the sounds of mirth and merriment which met his ears as he passed by the various ranges of apartments, jarring harshly with all his own sorrowful feelings, and in the despondency of his mind he marvelled that any but idiots or madmen could indulge in laughter in a world so full of care. Hurrying on to avoid such inharmonious tones, he approached the suite of rooms appropriated to Lady Constance, and was surprised at finding the door open. Entering, nothing but confusion seemed to reign in the antechamber, where her maids were usually found employed in various works. Here stood a frame for caul work, there one for embroidery; here a cushion for Italian lace thrown upon the ground, there a chair overturned; while two of the maids stood looking out of the window (to make use of the homely term) crying their eyes out.

"Where is your mistress?" demanded Sir Osborne, as he entered; the agitation of his own feelings, and the alarm he conceived from the strange disarray of the apartment, making him stint his form of speech to the fewest words possible.

"We do not know, Sir," replied one of the desolate damsels. "All that we know is, that she is gone."

"Gone!" cried Sir Osborne. "Gone! In the name of Heaven, where is she gone? Who is gone with her?"

"Jesu Maria, Sir! don't look so wild," cried the woman,

who thought herself quite pretty enough, even in her tears, to be a little familiar—"Dr. Wilbraham is with the Lady Constance, and so is Mistress Margaret, and therefore she is safe enough, surely."

"But cannot you say where she is gone?" cried the Knight. "When did she go? How?"

"She went but now, Sir," replied the woman. "She was sent for about an hour or more ago to the little tapestry-hall, to speak with my Lord Cardinal; and after that she came back very grave and serious, and made Mrs. Margaret pack up a great parcel of things, while she herself spoke with Dr. Wilbraham; and when that was done, they all three went away together; but before she went she gave each of us fifty marks a-piece, and said that she would give us news of her."

"Did she not drop any word in regard to her destination?" demanded Sir Osborne. "Any thing that might lead you to imagine whither she was gone?"

"Mrs. Margaret said they were going to London," said the other girl, turning round from the window, and speaking through her tears. "She said that they were going, because such was my Lord Cardinal's will. But I don't believe it, for she said it like a lie—and I'm sure I shall never see my young lady again.—I'm sure I shan't! So now, Sir Knight, go away and leave us, for we can tell you nothing more."

The Knight turned away. "Oh, Constance! Constance!" thought he, as he paced back to his apartments; "will you ever be able to resist all the influence they may bring against you? When you hear, too, of your lover's disgrace! Well, God is good; and sometimes joy shines forth out of sorrow, like the sun that dispels the storm." As he thought thus, the prediction of Sir Cesar, that their misfortune should be but of short duration, came across his mind. "The evil part of his prophecy," thought he "is already on my head. Why should I doubt the good? Come, I will be superstitious, and believe it fully; for hope is surely as much better than fear, as joy is better than sorrow. Will Constance ever give her hand to another? Oh, no, no! And surely, surely, I shall win her yet."

Of all the bright gifts with which heaven has blessed our youth, there is none more excellent than that elasticity of spirit which rebounds strongly from the depressing load of a world's care; and after the heaviest weight of sorrow, or the severest stroke of disappointment, raises us lightly up, and gives us back to hope and to enjoyment. It is peculiar to youth, and it is peculiar to good conduct; for the reiterated

burdens that years cast upon us as they fly, gradually rob the spring of expectation of its flexibility, and vice feels within itself that it has not the same right to hope as virtue. Sir Osborne's spirit was all rebound; and though surrounded with doubts, with difficulties, and with dangers, it was not long before he was ready to try again the wide adventurous world, with unabated vigour of endeavour, though rebuffed in his first endeavours, and disappointed in his brightest expectations.

On returning to his apartment, he found his faithful attendant ready prepared; and there was a sort of easy, careless confidence in the honest yeoman's manner, that well seconded the efforts of reviving hope in his master's breast. It seemed as if he never thought for a moment that want of success was possible; and besides, he was one of those on whom fortune has little power. He, himself, had no extraneous wants or wishes. Happy by temperament, and independent by bodily vigour, he derived from nature all that neither stoic nor epicurean could obtain by art. He was a philosopher by frame; and more than a philosopher, as the word is generally used, for he had a warm heart and a generous spirit, and joined affection for others to carelessness about himself.

Such was the companion, of all others, fitted to cheer Sir Osborne on his way—far more so than if he had been one of equal rank, or equal refinement, for he was always ready to assist, to serve, to amuse, or advise, without sufficient appreciation of finer feelings to encourage, even by understanding, those thoughts upon which the Knight might have dwelt painfully in conversation with any one else.

At the same time, Longpole was far above his class in every respect. He had some smattering of classical knowledge, which was all that rested with him of the laborious teaching which good Dr. Wilbraham had bestowed upon his youth; he not only could read, and write, but had read all the books he could get at, while a prisoner in France, and had, on more than one occasion, contrived to turn a stanza, though neither the stuff nor the workmanship were very good; and he had, moreover, a strange turn for jesting, which he took care to keep in perpetual exercise. To these he joined all the thousand little serviceable qualifications of an old soldier, and an extraordinary fluency in speaking French, which had proved very serviceable to him in many instances. Thus equipped inwardly, he now stood before Sir Osborne, with his outward man armed in the plain harness of a custrel, or shield-bearer, with casque and corslet, cuissards, brassards, and gauntlets, and consider-

ing that he was near six feet three inches in height, he was the sort of man that a Knight might not be sorry to see at his back, in the *mêlée* or the skirmish.

"Longpole," said the Knight, "give me my armour; I will put it on, while you place what clothes you can in the large horsebags. But, my good custrel, we must put something over our harness—give me that surcoat. You have not barded my horse, I trust."

"Indeed I have, my Lord," replied he; "and depend on it you may have need thereof. Remember how dear the barding of a horse is—I speak of the steel, which is, in fact, the true bard, or bardo, as the Italians call it; for the cloth that covers it is not the bard—and if you carry the steel with you, you may as well have the silk too."

"But 'twill weary the horse," said Sir Osborne; "however, as 'tis on, let it stay: only it may attract attention, and give too good a track to any that follow; though, God knows, I can hardly determine which way to turn my rein."

"To London! to London! to be sure, your Worship," cried Longpole; "that is the high road to every part on the earth, and off the earth, and under the earth. If a man want to go to heaven, he will there find guides; if he seek hell, he will find plenty going the same road; and if he love this world better, there shall he meet conveyance to every part of it. What would you think of just paying a visit to good Master William Hans, the merchant, to see if he cannot give us a cast over to Flanders? A thousand to one that he has some vessel going, or knows some one that has."

"Well bethought," answered Sir Osborne, slowly buckling on his armour; "it will soon grow dusk, and then our arms will call no attention—my hands refuse to help me on with my harness. I am very slow.—Nay, good Longpole, if you have already finished, take a hundred marks out of that bag, which will nearly empty it, and seek the three men the Duke of Buckingham gave me. Divide it between them, for their service; and, good Longpole, when you have done that, make inquiries about the palace, as to what road was taken by Lady Constance de Grey and Dr. Wilbraham—do not mention the lady—name only Dr. Wilbraham, as if I sought to speak with him."

Longpole obeyed, and after about half an hour's absence returned, tolerably successful in his inquiries; but much to his surprise and disappointment, he found his young Lord very nearly in the same situation in which he had left him, sitting in his chair, half armed, with his casque upon his knee, *his fine head* bare, and his eye fixed upon the fading gleams of

the evening sky, where some faint clouds just above the distant trees seemed as if lingering in the beams of the sun's bright eye, like man, still tenacious of the last ray of hope.

"Well, Longpole," cried he, waking from his reverie, "what news? Have you heard any thing of Lady Constance?" and, as if ashamed of his delay, he busied himself to finish the arrangement of his armour.

"Let me aid you, my Lord," said Longpole, kneeling down, and soon completing, piece by piece, what his master had left unfinished, replying at the same time to his question. "I have spoken with the man who carried the baggage down to the boat, my Lord, and he says that Dr. Wilbraham, Lady Constance, and one of her women, took water about half an hour after the Lord Cardinal, and seemed to follow his barge."

Sir Osborne fell into another reverie, from which, at last, he roused himself with a sigh. "Well, I can do nothing," said he; "like an angry child I might rage and struggle, but I could do no more.—Were I to say, 'twould but be committing me to the Tower, and then I must be still per force—"

Longpole heard all this with an air of great edification; but when he thought that his master had indulged himself enough, he ventured to interrupt him, by saying, "The sun, Sir, has gone to bed, had not we better take advantage of his absence, and make our way to London. Remember, Sir. He is an early riser at this time of the year, and will be up looking after us to-morrow before we are well aware."

"Ay, Longpole, ay!" replied the Knight, "I will linger no longer, for it is unavailing.—The trumpet must have sounded to supper by this time, has it not? So we shall have no idlers to gaze at our departure."

"The trumpet sounded as I went down but now," said Longpole, "and I met the sewer carrying in a brawn's head so like his own, that I could not help thinking he had killed and cooked his brother—they must be hard at his Grace's liege capons even now."

"Well, I am ready," said the Knight; "give me the surcoat of tawny velvet—now—no more feathers!" he continued, plucking from his casque the long plume that, issuing from the crest in graceful sweeps, fell back almost to his girdle, taking care, however, at the same time, to leave behind a small white glove wrought with gold, that had surrounded the insertion of the feather, and which he secured in its place, with particular attention. "Some one will have rare pillage of this apartment," he added, looking round; "that suit of black armour is worth

five hundred marks—but it matters not to think of it—we cannot carry them with us—the long sword and baldrick, Longpole, and the golds purs—I will go as a Knight, at least—now, take the bags—I follow. Farewell, King Henry, you have lost a faithful subject!"

Thus saying, he proceeded down the stairs after Longpole, and following a corridor, passed by one of the small doors of the great hall, through the partial opening of which was to be heard the rattle and the clatter of plates, of dishes, and of knives, and the buzz of many busy jaws. There was a feeling of disgust came over Sir Osborne as he heard it—he scarce knew why, and stayed not to inquire, but striding on, came speedily to the stable-yard, and was crossing towards the building in which his horses stood, when he observed a man loitering near the door of the stable, whom he soon discovered to be one of the yeomen given him by the Duke of Buckingham.

"On, Longpole," cried the Knight, "on, and send him upon some errand, for I am in no fit mood to speak with him now."

While Sir Osborne drew back into the door-way, Longpole advanced, and in a moment after the man was seen traversing the court in another direction. The Knight then proceeded, the horses were brought forth, and springing into the saddle, Sir Osborne, with a sigh given to the recollection of lost hopes, touched his charger with the spur, and rode out of the gates. Longpole followed, and in a few minutes they were on the high road to London.

CHAPTER V.

He is a worthy gentleman,
Exceedingly well read, and profited
In strange concealments.

HENRY IV.

It was hardly night when Sir Osborne departed; a faint and diminishing blush still tinged the eastern sky, the blackbird was still singing his full round notes from every thicket, and not a star had yet ventured forth upon the pathway of the sun, except one, that, bright and sweet even then, seemed like a fond and favoured child to the monarch of the sky, following

fearlessly on his brilliant steps, while others held aloof. The calm of the evening sank down gently on the young adventurer's heart; it was so mild, so placid; and though, perhaps, pensive, and tinged with melancholy, yet there was a sort of promise in that last smile of parting day, which led hope forward, and told of brighter moments yet to come. For some time the Knight indulged in vague dreams, made up, as indeed is the whole dream of human life, of hopes and fears, expectation, and despondency; then giving up thought for action, he spurred forward his horse, and proceeded as fast as he could towards London. Longpole followed in silence, for in spite of all his philosophy, he felt a sort of qualm at the idea of the long period which must intervene ere he could hope to see his pretty Geraldine, that took away several ounces of his loquacity.

London, at length, spread wide before them, and after some needless circumambulation, owing to the Knight's total ignorance of the labyrinthian intricacies of the city, and the dangerous littleness of Longpole's knowledge thereof, they at length reached Gracious Street, and discovered the small, square, paved court, long since built over, and I believe now occupied by a tea-dealer, but which then afforded a sort of area before the dwelling of the Flemish merchant, William Hans. On the left hand, nearest the river, was situated the counting-house; and to the front, as well as to the right, stretched a range of buildings which, from their polyphemuslike appearance, having but one window or aperture in the front, (except the door,) the Knight concluded to be those warehouses, whose indiscriminate maw swallowed up the produce of all parts of the earth. Over the counting-house, however, appeared several smaller windows principally glazed, and through one of these shone forth upon the night the light of a taper, giving notice that some one still waked within. While Longpole dismounted, and knocked with the hilt of his dagger against a little door by the side of that which led to the counting-house, the Knight watched the light in the window; but he watched, and Longpole knocked, in vain; for neither did the light move, nor the door open, till Sir Osborne bethought him of a stratagem to call the merchant's attention.

"Make a low knocking against the windows of the counting-house, Longpole," said he, "as if you were trying to force them. I have known these money-getters as deaf as adders to any sound but that which menaces their mammon."

Longpole obeyed, and the moment after the light moved "Hold, hold!" cried the Knight, "he hears;" and the next

moment the casement window was pushed open, through which the head of the good merchant protruded itself, vociferating, "Who's tere? What do you want? I'll call the watch—Watch! watch!"

"Taizez vous!" cried the Knight, addressing him in French, not being able to speak the Brabant dialect of the merchant, and yet not wishing to proclaim his errand aloud in English, "Nous sommes amis—descendez, Guillaume Hans —c'est le Sire de Darnley."

"Oh, I'll come down! I'll come down!" cried the merchant. "Run, Skippenhausen, and open te door. I'll come down, my coot Lord, in a minute."

The two travellers had not now long to wait, for in a moment or two the little door at which Longpole had at first in vain applied for admission, was thrown open by a personage, the profundity of whose nether garments, together with his long-waisted, square-cut, blue coat, with the seams, and there were many, all bound with white lace, induced Sir Osborne immediately to write him down for a Dutch navigator. Descending the stairs, immediately behind this first apparition, came the merchant himself, with his black gown, which had probably been laid aside for the night, now hurried on, not with the most correct adjustment in the world, for it looked very much as if turned inside out, which might well happen to a robe whose sleeves were not above six inches long. Sir Osborne, however, did not stay to investigate the subject very minutely, but explaining to the good merchant that he had something particular to say to him, he was conducted into the counting-house, where he informed him as succinctly as possible of what had occurred, and what he desired. Good Master Hans was prodigal of his astonishment, which vented itself in various exclamations in Flemish, English, and French, after which, coming to business, as he said, he told the Knight that he could put up his horses in the same stable where he kept his drays, and that after that they would talk of the rest. "But on my wort, my coot Lord," said he, "I must go with your man myself, for there is not one soul in the place to let him in or out of the stable, which is behind the house."

The most troublesome part of the affair for the moment, was to take off the bard or horse armour, that covered the Knight's charger, as it could not be left in the stable till the next morning, when the merchant's carters would arrive; and poor William Hans was desperately afraid that the round of the watch would pass while the operation was in execution, and

suppose that he was receiving some contraband goods, which might cause a search the next day.

The business, however, was happily accomplished by the aid of the Dutch Captain, who, seeing that there was something mysterious going forward, and having a taste that way, gave more active assistance than either his face or figure might have taught one to expect.

He also it was, who, while the good merchant with the candle in his hand, led our friend Longpole with the horses to the stable, conducted the Knight up-stairs into the room where they had first discovered the light, and invited him, in extremely good English, to be seated. By the appearance of the chamber, it seemed that Master Hans had been preparing to make great cheer for his Captain, for various were the flagons and bottles that stood upon the table, together with trenchers and plates unused, and a pile of manchet and spice bread, with other signs and prognostications of a rare supper; not to mention an immense bowl which stood in the midst, and whose void rotundity seemed yearning for some savoury mass not yet concocted.

It was not long before the merchant reappeared, accompanied by Longpole, who, according to the custom of those days, when many a various rank might be seen at the same board, seated himself at the farther end of the table, after having taken off his master's casque, and soon engaged the Dutch Captain in conversation, while the Knight consulted with William Hans, regarding the means of quitting England as speedily as possible.

"It is very unlucky you did not let me know before," said the merchant, "for we might easily have cot the ship of my goot friend Skippenhausen there, ready to-day, and you could have sailed to-morrow morning by the first tide. You might trust him! you might trust him with your life! Bless you, my coot Lord, 'tis he that brings me over the Bibles from Holland."

"But cannot he sail the day after to-morrow," said the Knight, "if one day will be sufficient to complete his freight?"

"Oh, that he can," answered the merchant; "but what will you do till then?" He added, with a melancholy shake of the head, "You will never like to lie in the warehouse, like a parcel of dry goods?"

"Why, it must be so, I suppose," said the Knight, "if you have any place capable of concealing me."

"Oh, dear life, yes!" cried William Hans; "a place that would conceal a dozen. I had it made on purpose after that

evil May-day, when the wild rabblement of London rose, and nearly murdered all the strangers they could find. I thought what had happened once might happen again, and so I had in some of my own country people, and caused it to be made very securely."

The matter was now soon arranged. It was agreed that the Knight and Longpole should lie concealed at the merchant's till the ship was ready to sail, and that then Master Skippenhausen was to provide them a safe passage to some town in Flanders; which, being finally settled between all parties, it only remained to fix the price of their conveyance with the Dutchman. "I am an honest man," said he, on mention of this subject, "and will not rob you. If you were in no hurry to go, and could go quietly, I would charge you ten marks a ton; but as you are in distress, I will only charge you fifteen."

"Faith!" burst forth Longpole, "you are very liberal. Why, do you charge us *more*, not *less*, because we are in distress?"

"Certainly," answered the Dutchman, with imperturbable tranquillity: "nine men out of ten would charge you five times as much, when they found you wanted to go very bad; now I only charge you one-half more."

"I believe you are right," said Sir Osborne. "However, I do not object to your price: but tell me, what do you mean by fifteen marks a ton? Do you intend to weigh us?"

"To be sure," answered the Dutchman; "why not? All my freight is weighed, and why not you, too? No, no. I'll have nothing on board that is not weighed. It's all put in the book."

"Well," said the Knight, with a smile, "it does not much matter. Can you take my horses too by weight?"

"Certainly," replied the other; "I can take any thing: but I am responsible for nothing. If your horses kick themselves to death in the hold, that is not my fault."

"I will take care of that," said the Knight. "Here, Longpole, help me to put off my harness—I cannot sit in it all night."

While the crustel was thus employed in aiding his Lord to disarm, the door opened, and in bustled a servant-maid, of about two or three-and-thirty, whose rosy cheeks had acquired a deeper tinge by the soft wooing of a kitchen fire, and whose sharp eyes shot forth those brilliant rays, generally supposed to be more animated by the wrathful spirit of cookery and of ardent coals, than by any softer power of flame. Immediately

that she beheld two strangers, forth burst upon the head of William Hans the impending storm. She abused him for telling her that there would be only himself and the captain; she vowed that she had not cooked half salmon enough for four; she declared that she had only put down plates and bread for two; and she ended, by protesting that she never in her life had seen any body so stupid as he himself, William Hans.

To the mind of Sir Osborne, the lady somewhat forgot the respect due to her master; but, however, whether it was from one of those strange mysterious ascendencies, which cooks and house-keepers occasionally acquire over middle-aged single gentlemen, or whether it was from a natural meekness of disposition in the worthy Fleming, he bore it with most exemplary patience; and when want of breath for a moment pulled the check-string of the lady's tongue, he informed her that the two strangers had come unexpectedly. Thereupon, muttering to herself something very like, "Why the devil did they come at all!" she set down on the table a dish of hot boiled salmon; and, after flouncing out of the room, returned with the air of the most injured person in the world, bringing in a platter full of dried pease, likewise boiled.

These various ingredients (the salmon was salted) William Hans immediately seized upon, and emptied them into the great bowl we have already mentioned. Then casting off his gown, and tucking up the sleeves of his coat, he mashed them all together; adding various slices of some well preserved pippins, a wooden spoon's capacity of fine oil, and three of vinegar.—Fancy such a mess, to eat at eleven o'clock at night, and then go to bed and dream of the Devil!—Boiled salmon and pease!—apples and oil—and vinegar to crown it!

However, Sir Osborne resisted the tempting viands, and contented himself with some of the plain bread, although both the merchant and the captain pressed him several times to partake; assuring him, while the oil and vinegar ran out at the corners of their mouths, that it was "Very coot—very coot indeed—excellent!" And so much did they seem to enjoy it, that the unhappy Longpole was tempted for his sins to taste the egregious compound, and begged a small quantity at the hands of good Master Hans. The bountiful merchant shovelled a wagon-load of it upon his plate, and the yeoman, fancying himself bound in common politeness to eat it, contrived to swallow three whole mouthfulls, with a meekness and patience that in the succeeding reign would have classed him with the martyrs; but at the fourth, his humanity rebelled, and

thrusting the plate from him, with vehemence that nearly overturned all the rest, "No!" cried he. "No, by ——! there is no standing that!"

The merchant and his countryman chuckled amazingly at poor Longpole's want of taste, and even the Knight, albeit in no very laughter-loving mood, could not help smiling at his custrel's discomfiture. But as all things must come to an end, the salt salmon and pease were at length concluded, and some marmalades and confections substituted in its place, which proved much more suitable to the taste of such of the company as were uninitiated in the mysteries of Flemish cookery. With the sweetmeats came the wines, which were all of peculiar rarity and excellence, for in this particular at least William Han- was a man of no small taste, which he kept indeed in continual practice. Not that we would imply that he drank too much or too often, but still the god of the gilded horns had been gently fingering his nose, and with a light and skilful pencil had decorated all the adjacent parts, with a minute and delicate tracery of interwoven rosy lines.

As the wine diffused itself over his stomach, it seemed to buoy up his heart to his lips. Prudence too slackened her reins, and on went his tongue, galloping, as a beggar's horse is reported to do, on a way that shall be nameless. Many were the things he said, which he should not have said, and many were the things he told, which would have been better left untold. Among others, he acknowledged himself a Lutheran, which in that age, if it tended to find out bliss in the other world, was very likely to bring down damnation in this. He averred that he looked upon the Bishop of Rome, as he called the Pope, in the light of that Babylonish old lady, whose more particular qualification is not fit for ears polite; and he confessed, that when Dr. Fitz-James, the Bishop of London, had bought up all the translations of the Bible he could find, and burnt them at Paul's-cross, he had furnished the furious Romanist with a whole cargo of incomplete copies. "So that," continued he, "the Bishop damned his own soul the more completely, by burning God's word, and paid the freight and binding of a new and complete set into the bargain." And he chuckled and grinned with mercantile glee at his successful speculation, and with puritanic triumph over the prosecutors of his sect.

Sir Osborne soon began to be weary of the scene, and begged to know where he should find his chamber, upon which Master Hans rose to conduct him, with perfect steadiness of limb, the wine having affected nothing but his tongue. Lighting a lamp,

he preceded the Knight with great reverence, and while Longpole followed with the armour, he led the way up a little narrow stairs, to a small room, whose walls, though not covered with arras, were hung with painted canvass, after a common fashion of the day, representing the whole history of Jonah and the whale; wherein the fish was decidedly cod, and the sea undoubtedly parsley and butter, notwithstanding any thing that the scientific may say to such an assemblage. The ship was evidently one that would have sunk in any sea except that she was in—she could not have sailed across Chancery Lane in a wet day without foundering; and, as if to render her heavier, the artist had stowed her to the head with Dutchmen, which made her like the *Dinde à la sainte Alliance*, (viz. a turkey stuffed with woodcocks,) one heavy thing crammed full of another.

The whole of the room, however, was cleanliness itself; the little bed that stood in the corner, with its fine linen sheets, the small deal table, even the very sand upon the floor, all were as white as snow. "I am afraid, my coot Lord," said the merchant, who never lost his respect for his guest, "that your Lordship will be poorly lodged; but these three chambers along in front are what I keep always ready, in case of any of my captains arriving unexpectedly, and it is all clean and proper, I can assure you. I will now go and bring you a cushion for your head, and what the French call the *coupe de bonne nuit*, and will myself call your Lordship to-morrow, before any one is up, that you may take to your hiding-place without being seen."

The Knight was somewhat surprised to find his host's recollection so clear, notwithstanding his potations; but he knew not what much habit in that kind will do, and still doubted whether his memory would be active enough to remind him that he was to call him when the next morning should really come.

However, he did Master Hans injustice, for without fail, at the hour of five, he presented himself at the Knight's door, and soon after rousing Longpole, he conducted them both down to the warehouses, through whose deep obscure they groped their way, amid tons, and bags, and piles, and bales, with no other light than such straggling rays as found their way through the chinks and crevices of the boards which covered the windows for the night.

At length an enormous butt presented itself, which appeared to be empty, for without any great effort the old merchant con-

trived to move it from its place. Behind this appeared a pile of untanned hides, which he set himself to put on one side as fast as possible, though for what purpose Sir Osborne did not well understand, as he beheld nothing behind them but the rough planks which formed the wall of the warehouse. As the pile diminished, a circumstance occurred which made all parties hurry their movements, and despatch the hides as fast as possible. This was nothing else than a loud and reiterated knocking at the outer door, which at first induced Master Hans to raise his head and listen, but then, without saying a word, he set himself to work again harder than ever, and with the assistance of the Knight and Longpole, soon cleared away all obstruction, and left the fair face of the boarded wall before them.

Kneeling down, the merchant now thrust his fingers under the planks, where the apparently rude workmanship of the builder had left a chink between them and the ground—then applied all his strength to a vigorous heave, and in a moment three of the planks at once slid up, being made to play in a groove, like the door of a lion's den, and discovered a small chamber beyond, lighted by a glazed aperture towards the sky.

"In! in! my coot Lord!" cried the merchant, "don't you hear how they are knocking at the door? They will soon rouse my maid Julian, though she sleeps like a marmot.—What they want I don't know."

Sir Osborne and Longpole were not tardy in taking possession of their hiding-place, and having themselves pulled down the sliding door by means of the cross-bars, which in the inside united the three planks together, they fastened it with a little bolt, whereby any one within could render his retreat as firm, and, to all appearances, as immoveable as the rest of the wall. They then heard the careful William Hans replace the hides, roll back the butt, and pace away; after which, nothing met their ear but the unceasing knocking at the outer door, which seemed every minute to assume a fiercer character, and which was perfectly audible in their place of refuge.

The merchant appeared to treat the matter very carelessly, and not to make any reply till it suited his convenience, for during some minutes he let the knockers knock on. At length, however, that particular sound ceased, and from a sort of rush, and clatter of several tongues, the Knight concluded that the door had been at length opened. At the same time the voice of the Fleming made itself heard, in well-assumed tones of passion, abusing the intruders for waking him so early in the

morning, bringing scandal upon his house, and taking away his character.

"Seize the old villain!" cried another voice; "we have certain information that they are here.—Search every hole and corner, they must have arrived last night."

Such, and various other broken sentences, pronounced by the loud tongue of some man in office, reached the ears of Sir Osborne, convincing him—notwithstanding Henry's assurance that till noon of that day he should remain unpursued—that Wolsey, taking advantage of the King's absence at Richmond, had lost no time in issuing the warrant for his arrest.

Sitting down on a pile of books, which was the only thing the little chamber contained, he listened with some degree of anxiety to the various noises of the search. Now it was a direction from the chief of the party to look here or to look there,—now the various cries of the searchers, when they even thought they had discovered something suspicious, or even disappointed in some expectation—now the rolling of the butts, the overturning of the bales, the casting down of the skins and leathers—now the party was far off, and now so near, that the Knight could hear every movement of the man who examined the hides before the door of his hiding-place. Even at one time, in the eagerness of his search, the fellow struck his elbow against the boarding, and might probably have discovered that it was hollow underneath, had not the tingling pain of his arm engaged all his attention, passing off in a fit of dancing and stamping, mingled with various ungodly execrations.

At length, however, the pursuers seemed entirely foiled, and after having passed more than two hours, some in examining the dwelling house, and some the warehouse—after having tumbled over every article of poor William Hans' goods, their loud cries, and insolent swaggering, dwindled away to low murmurs of disappointment; and growing fainter and fainter as they proceeded to the door, the sounds at length ceased entirely, and left the place in complete silence. Not long after the workmen arrived and began their ordinary occupations for the day, and Sir Osborne and Longpole thanked their happy stars, both for having escaped the present danger, and for their enemy's search being now probably turned in some other direction.

CHAPTER VI.

NORFOLK.—What, are you chafed?
Ask God for temperance; that's the appliance only
Which your disease requires.

SHAKSPEARE.

As the day passed on, Sir Osborne grew more and more impatient under his confinement. He felt a sort of degradation in being thus pent up, like a wild beast in a cage; and though, with invincible patience, he had lain a thousand times more still, in many an ambuscade, he felt an almost irresistible desire to unbolt the door, and assure himself that he was really at large, by going forth and exercising his limbs in the free air. But then came the remembrance that such a proceeding would almost infallibly transfer him to a still stricter prison; where, instead of being voluntary, and but for one day, his imprisonment would be forced and long continued. The thought, too, of Constance de Grey, and the hope of winning her yet, gave great powers of endurance; and he contented himself with every now and then marching up and down the little chamber, which, taken transversely, just afforded him space for three steps and a half; and, at other times, with speaking in a whisper to Longpole, who, having brought the armour down with him, sat, in one corner, polishing off any little dim spots that the damp of the night air might have left upon it. "This is very tiresome," said the Knight.

"Very tiresome, indeed, my Lord!" replied Longpole. "I've been fancying myself a blackbird, in a wicker cage, for the last hour.—May I whistle?"

"No, no," cried the Knight. "Give me the casque, I will polish that, by way of something to do. Don't you think, Longpole, if underneath the volant piece, a stout sort of *avant taille* was carried down, about an inch broad, and two inches long, of hard steel, it would prevent the visor from being borne in, as I have often seen, by the blow of a solid lance?"

"Yes!" answered Longpole. "But it would prevent your Lordship from blowing your nose. Oh! I do hate improvement, my Lord. Depend upon it, 'tis the worst thing in the world. Men improve, and improve, and improve, till they leave nothing that's original on the earth. I would wager you

Lordship a hundred marks, that, by two or three hundred years hence, people will have so improved their armour, that there will be none at all."

"Zounds, Bill!" cried a voice in the warehouse. "Don't you hear some folks talking?"

"It's some one in the street," answered another voice. "Yet it sounded vastly near, too."

This, however, was quite sufficient warning for the Knight to be silent; and taking up one of the books, on which he had been sitting, he found that it was an English version of the Bible, with copies of which it appears that Master William Hans was in the habit of supplying the English Protestants. Our mother Eve's bad old habit of prying into forbidden sources of knowledge, affects us all more or less; and as the Bible was at that time prohibited in England, except to the clergy, Sir Osborne very naturally opened it, and began reading. What effect its perusal had upon his mind matters little; suffice it that he read on, and found sufficient matter of interest therein to occupy him fully. Hour after hour fled, and day waned slowly, but having once laid his hand upon that book, the Knight no longer felt the tardy current of the time, and night fell before the day, which he anticipated as so tedious, seemed to have half past away.

A long while elapsed after the darkness had interrupted Sir Osborne in his study, before the warehouse was closed for the night; which, however, was no sooner accomplished, than good Master Hans, accompanied by his friend Skippenhausen, came to deliver them from their confinement.

"He, he, he!" cried the merchant, as they came forth. "Did you hear what a noise they made, my coot Lord, when they came searching this morning?—They did not find them though, for they were all in beside you."

"What do you mean?" demanded the Knight. "Who were in beside us? Nobody came here."

"I mean the Bibles; I mean the Word of God," cried the merchant; "the bread of life, that those villains came seeking this morning, which, if they had got, they would have burnt most sacrilegiously, as an offering to the harlot of their idolatry."

"Then I was wrong in supposing that they searched for me?" said the Knight, with a smile at his own mistake.

"Oh, no, not for you at all!" replied the merchant. "It was the Bibles that Skippenhausen brought over from Holland, for the poor English Protestants, who are here denied to eat

of the bread, or drink of the water of salvation.—But now, my Lord, if you will condescend to be weighed, you will be ready to sail at four in the morning, for your horses and horse-armour are all weighed and aboard, and the cargo will be complete, when your Lordship and your gentleman are shipped."

Finding that Master Skippenhausen was bent upon ascertaining his weight, Sir Osborne consented to get into the merchant's large scales, and being as it were lotted with Longpole, his horse-bags, and his armour, he made a very respectable entry in the Captain's books. After this, Master Hans led him into his counting house, and displayed his books before him; but as the items of his account might be somewhat tedious, it may be as well merely to say, that the young Knight found he had expended in the short time he had remained in Henry's luxurious court, more than two thousand five hundred marks; so that of the two thousand seven hundred which he had possessed, in the hands of the Fleming, and the thousand which he had won at the Duke of Buckingham's, but one thousand two hundred and a trifle remained.

Sir Osborne was surprised, but the accurate merchant left no point in doubt, and the young Knight began to think that it was lucky he had been driven from the Court before all his funds were completely expended. He found, however, to his satisfaction, that a great variety of arms and warlike implements, which he had gathered together while in Flanders, and had left in the warehouses of the merchant since he had been in England, had been shipped on board Skippenhausen's vessel, whose acknowledgment of having received them, William Hans now put into his hand; and having paid him the sum due, and received an acquittance, he led him once more up-stairs into the scene of the last night's revel.

We shall pass over this second evening at the merchant's house, without entering into any details thereof, only remarking that it passed more pleasantly than the former one, there being at the supper table some dishes which an Englishman could eat, and which his stomach might probably digest. At an early hour Sir Osborne cast himself upon his bed, and slept, though every now and then the thoughts of his approaching voyage made him start up, and wonder what was the hour; and then as Skippenhausen did not appear, he would lie down and sleep again, each half hour of this disturbed slumber seeming like a whole long night.

At length, however, when he just began to enjoy a more

tranquil rest, he was awakened by the seaman; and dressing himself as quick as possible, he followed to William Han's parlour, where the worthy merchant waited, to drink a parting cup with his guests, and wish them a prosperous voyage.

As the easiest means of carrying their harness, Sir Osborne and Longpole had both armed themselves, and as soon as they had received the Fleming's benediction, in a cup of sack, they donned their casques, and followed the captain towards the vessel.

It was a dull and drizzly morning, and many was the dark foul street, and many the narrow tortuous lane through which they had to pass. Wapping, all dismal and wretched as it appears even now-a-day, to the unfortunate voyager, who called from his warm bed in a wet London morning, is rolled along through its long hopeless windings, and amid its tall spiritless houses, towards the ship destined to bear him to some other land; and which, with a perversion of intellect only to be met with in ships, stage-coaches, and other wooden-headed things, is always sure to set out at an hour when all rational creatures are sleeping in their beds.—Wapping, I say, as it stands at present, in its darkness and its filth, is gay and lightsome to the paths by which Worshipful Master Skippenhausen conducted Sir Osborne and his follower towards his vessel. Sloppy, silent, and deserted, the streets boasted no living creature besides themselves, without, indeed, it was some poor mechanic, who, with his shoulders up to his ears, and his hands clasped together to keep them warm, picked his way through the dirt towards his early toil. The heavens frowned upon them, and the air that surrounded them was one of those chill, wet, thick, dispiriting atmospheres, which no other city than London can boast in the month of May.

There is a feeling of melancholy, attached to quitting anything, to which we have, even for a time, habituated our hopes and wishes—or even our thoughts—however dull, however uninteresting a place may be in itself, if therein we have familiar associations, and customary feelings, we must ever feel a degree of pain in leaving it. I am convinced that there is a sort of glutinous quality in the mind of man, which sticks it to every thing it rests upon—or is it attraction of cohesion? However, the Knight had a thousand sufficient reasons for feeling melancholy and depressed, as he quitted the capital of his native land. He left behind him hopes and expectations, and affection, and love;—almost all those feelings, which like the various colours mingled in a sunbeam, unite to form the light

of human existence, and without which, it is dull, dark, and heavy; like heaven without the sun. And yet, perhaps, he would have felt the parting less, had the morning looked more brightly on him; had there been one gleam of light, to give a fair augury for willing hope to seize.—But no, it was all black and gloomy; and the very sky seemed to reflect the feelings of his own bosom. Thus as he walked along after the Captain, there was a stern heavy determination in his footfall, equally unlike the light step of expectation, or the calm march of contentment. What he felt was not precisely despair, but it was the bitterness of much disappointment; and he strode quickly onward, as if at once to conquer and to fly from his own sensations.

At length, a narrow lane brought them to the side of the river, where waited a boat to convey them to the Dutchman's ship, which lay out some way from the bank. Beside the stairs, stood a man apparently on the watch, but he seemed quite familiar with Master Skippenhausen, who gave him a nod as he passed, and pointing to his companions, said, "This is the gentleman and his servant."

"Very well," said the man; "go on!" and the whole party taking their places in the boat without further question, were speedily pulled round to the vessel by the two stout Dutchmen who waited them. As soon as they were on board, the Captain led the Knight down into the cabin, which he found in a state of glorious confusion, but which Skippenhausen assured him, would be the safest place for him, till they had got some way down the river; for that they might have visiters on board, whom he could not prevent from seeing all that was upon the deck, though he would take care that they should not come below.

"Ay, Master Skippenhausen," cried Longpole, "for God's sake fetter all spies and informers with a silver ring, and let us up on deck again as soon as possible, for I am tired of being hid about in holes and corners, like a crooked sixpence in the box of a careful maid; and as for my Lord, he looks more weary of it than even I am."

The master promised faithfully, that as soon as the vessel had passed Blackwall, he would give them notice, and then proceeded to the deck, where, almost immediately after, all the roaring and screaming made itself heard, which seems absolutely necessary to get a ship under weigh. In truth, it was a concert as delectable as any that ever greeted a poor voyager on his outset; the yelling of the seamen, the roaring

of the master and his subordinates, the creaking and whistling of the masts, and cordage, together with volleys of clumsey Dutch oaths, all reached the ears of the Knight, as he sat below in the close foul cabin, and joined to his own painful feelings, made him almost fancy himself in the Dutch part of Hades. Still the swinging of the vessel told, that, though not as an effect, yet at least as an accompaniment to all this din, the ship was already on her voyage, and, after a few minutes, a more regular and easy motion began to take place, as she glided down what is now called the pool.

However, much raving, and swearing, and cursing, to no purpose, still went on, whenever the vessel passed in the proximity of another; and, as there were several dropping down at the same time, manifold were the opportunities which presented themselves for the captain and the pilot to exercise their execrative faculties. But at length, the disturbance began to cease, and the ship held her even course down the river, while the sun, now fully risen, dispelled the clouds that had hung over the early morning, and the day looked more favourably upon their passage.

Sir Osborne gazed out of the little window in the stern, noticing the various villages that they passed on their way down, till the palace at Greenwich, and the park sweeping up behind, met his eye, together with many a little object associated with hopes, and feelings, and happiness gone by, recalling most painfully all that expectation had promised, and disappointment had done away. It was too much to look upon steadily, and turning from the sight, he folded his arms on the table, and burying his eyes on them, remained in that position, till the master descending, told him that they were now free from all danger.

On this information, the Knight gladly mounted the little ladder, and paced up and down the deck, enjoying the free air, while Longpole jested with Master Skippenhausen, teasing him the more, perhaps, because he saw that the seamen had put on that sort of surly domineering air which the master of a vessel often assumes, the moment his foot touches the deck, however gay and mild he may be on shore. Nevertheless, as we are now rapidly approaching that part of this book, wherein the events become more thronged and pressing, we must take the liberty of leaving out all the long conversation, which Vonderbrugius reports as having taken place between Skippenhausen and Longpole, as well as a very minute and particular account of a sail down the river Thames.

wherewith the learned professor embellishes his history, and which, though doubtless very interesting to the Dutch Burgomasters, and their Vrous, of a century and a half ago, would not greatly edify the British public of the present day, when every cook-maid steps once a year into the steam packet, and is paddled down to Margate, with less trouble than it took an Englishman of the reign of Harry the Eighth to go from Charing cross to Lombard-street.

The wind was in their favour, and the tide running strongly down, so that passing one by one, by Woolwich, Purfleet, Erith, Gravesend, and sundry other places, in a few hours they approached near the ocean limits of the English land; while the river, growing mightier and mightier as it rolled on, seemed to rush towards the sea with a sort of daring equality, rather as a rival than a tributary, till meeting its giant sovereign, it gave vent to its pride in a few frothy waves, and then, yielding to his sway, poured all its treasures in his bosom.

Before they had reached the mouth of the river, they beheld a vessel which had preceded them, suddenly take in sail and lay-to under the lee of the Essex shore; the reason of which was made very evident the moment after, by the vane at the mast-head, wheeling round, and the wind coming in heavy squalls right upon their beam. The Dutchman's ship was not one at all calculated to sail near the wind, and paying little consideration to the necessity of Sir Osborne's case, he followed the example of the vessel before him, and gave orders for taking in sail and laying-to, declaring that the gale would not last. The Knight remonstrated, but he might as well have talked to the wind itself. Skippenhausen was quite inflexible, not even taking the pains to answer a word, and contenting himself with muttering a few sentences in high Dutch, interspersed with various objurgatory addresses to the sailors.

Whether the worthy Hollander's conduct on this occasion was right, proper, and seaman-like, we must leave to some better qualified tribunal than our own weak noddle to determine, professing to be most profoundly ignorant on nautical affairs; but so the matter stood, that the Knight was obliged to swing one whole night in an uncomfortable hammock, in an uncomfortable ship, in the mouth of the River Thames; with the bitter fancy resting on his mind, that this waste of time was quite unnecessary, and that with a little courage, and a little skill, on the part of the master, he might before the next morning have been landed at Dunkirk, to which city he was to be safely carried, according to his agreement with the *Dutchman*.

By day-break the next morning, the wind was rather more favourable, and at all events by no means violent, so that the vessel was soon once more under weigh. Still, however, they made but little progress; and even the ship that was before them, though a faster sailer, and one that could keep nearer the wind, made little more way than themselves. While in this situation, trying by a long tack to mend their course, with about the distance of half a mile between them and the other vessel, they perceived a ship of war, apparently run out from the Essex coast some way to windward, and bear down upon them with all sail set.

"Who have we here, I wonder?" said the Knight, addressing Skippenhausen, who had been watching the approaching vessel attentively for some minutes.

"'Tis an English man-of-war," replied the master. "Coot now, don't you see the red cross on her flag. By my life, she is making a signal to us!—It must be you she is wanting, my Lord, for, on my life, I have nothing contraband but you aboard—I will not understand her signal though, and as the breeze is coming up I will run for it. Go you down in the cabin and hide yourself."

"I will go down," replied the Knight. "But hide myself? I will not—I have had too much of it already."

Skippenhausen, who, as we before hinted, had, by the long habit of smuggling in a small way, acquired a taste for the concealed and mysterious, tried in vain to persuade the Knight to hide himself under a pile of bedding. On this subject Sir Osborne was as deaf as the other had been the night before, in regard to proceeding on their voyage; and all that the master could obtain was, that the two Englishmen would go below, and wait the event, while he tried by altering his course, and running before the wind, to weary the pursuers if they were not very hearty in the cause.

"Well, Longpole," said Sir Osborne, "I suppose that we must look upon ourselves as caught at last."

"Would your Worship like us to stand to our arms?" demanded the yeoman. "We could make this cabin good a long while in case of necessity."

"By no means," replied the Knight. "I will on no account resist the King's will. Besides, it would be spilling good blood to little purpose, for we must yield at last."

"As your Lordship pleases," answered the custrel. "But knowing how fond you are of a good downright blow of estoc at a fair gentleman's head, I thought you might like to take

advantage of the present occasion, which may be your last for some time."

"Perhaps it may be a mistake still," answered the Knight, "and pass away like the search for the bibles when we were concealed in the warehouse. However, we shall soon see: at all events till it comes I shall take no heed about it," and casting himself into a seat, with a bitter smile, as if wearied out with Fortune's caprices, and resolved to struggle no longer for her favour, he gazed out of the little stern window upon the wide expanse of water that rolled away towards the horizon. The aperture of this window not being more than six inches either in height or width, and cut through the thick timbers of the Dutch vessel for considerably more than a foot in depth, was in fact little better than a telescope without a glass, so that the Knight's view was not a little circumscribed in respect to all the nearer objects, only being able to see, as the ship pitched, the glassy green waves mingled with white foam, rushing tumultuously from under her stern, as she now scudded before the wind, leaving a long, glistening, frothy track behind, to mark where she had made her path through the midst of the broad sea. As he looked farther out, however, the prospect widened, and at the extreme verge, where the sea and sky, almost one in unity of hue, showed still a faint line of light to mark their boundary, he could perceive, rising up as it were from the bosom of the deep, the light tracery of masts and rigging, belonging to far distant vessels, whose hulls were still concealed by the convexity of the waters. Nearer, but yet within the range that the narrowness of the window allowed his sight, appeared the vessel that had dropped down the river just before them, and the English ship of war, which, crowding all sail before the wind, seemed in full chase—not of their companion, but of themselves, for the other, in obedience to the signal, had hauled her wind and lay-to.

Sir Osborne now watched to ascertain whether the man-of-war gained upon them, but an instant's observation put an end to all doubt. She evidently came nearer and nearer, and soon approached so far, as to be scarcely within the range of his view, being lost and seen alternately at every motion of the ship. As length, as the vessel pitched, she disappeared for a moment, then came in sight again—a quick flash glanced along her bow, and the moment after, when she was no longer visible to his eye, the sullen report of a cannon came upon the wind.

By a sudden change in the motion of the vessel, together with various cries upon the deck, the Knight now concluded that

the Dutchman had at length obeyed this peremptory signal, and lay-to, which was in fact the case, for passing over to the window on the other side, he again got a view of the English ship, which sailed majestically up, and then when within a few hundred yards, put out, and manned a boat, which rowed off towards them. Sir Osborne had not long an opportunity of observing the boat in her approach, as she soon passed out of the small space which he could see, but in a few minutes after the voice of some one raised to its very highest pitch, made itself heard from a distance, hardly near enough for the Knight to distinguish the words, though he every now and then caught enough to perceive that the whole consisted of a volley of curses discharged at Master Skippenhausen, for not having obeyed the signal.

The Dutchman replied in a tone of angry surliness, that he had not seen their signal, and in a minute or two more, a harsh grating rush against the vessel, told that the boat was along-side.

"I will teach you, you Dutch son of a dog-fish, not to lay-to when one of the King's ships makes the signal," cried a loud voice by the side. "Have you any passengers on board?"

"Yes, five or six," answered the Dutchman.

"Stop! I will come on board," cried the voice, and then proceeded, as if while climbing the ship's side, "Have you one Sir Osborne Maurice with you?"

"No!" answered Skippenhausen, stoutly.

"Well, we will soon see that," cried the other, "for I have orders to attach him for high-treason. Come, bustle! disperse, my boys!—You, Wilfred, go forward; I will down here and see who is in the cabin; and if I find him, Master Dutchman, I will slit your ears."

CHAPTER VII.

My conscience will serve to run from this Jew.
MERCHANT OF VENICE.

We will now return to Lady Constance de Grey, whose fate must no longer be left in uncertainty; and taking up the thread of our narrative at the moment Sir Osborne quitted her, on the eventful evening which destroyed all his fond expecta-

tions, we will, in our homely way, record the events that followed.

It may be remembered, that at the very instant the Knight parted from good Dr. Wilbraham, at the door of the young lady's apartment in the Palace at Richmond, a letter was put into the clergyman's hands, to be delivered to the heiress of de Grey, for such was the style of the address. No time was lost by Dr. Wilbraham, in giving the letter to his Lady's hands; and, on being opened, it proved to be one of those anonymous epistles, which are seldom even worth the trouble of deciphering, being prompted always by some motive which dares not avow itself.

However, as Lady Constance was very little in the habit of receiving letters from any one, and certainly none to which the writer dared not put his name, mere curiosity would have prompted her, if nothing else, to read it through; the more especially as it was written in a fine and clerkly hand, and in a style and manner to be acquired alone by high and courtly education. Although the letter is still extant, we shall not copy it, having already given one specimen of the compositions of that day, and not at all wishing to depreciate the times of our hero and heroine, in the estimation of our more cultivated readers. Let it be considered as sufficient, then, that we merely say, the letter professed to be a warning from a friend, and informed the young lady, that the most rigorous measures were about to be adopted towards her, in case of her still refusing to comply with Wolsey's command, in respect to her marriage with Lord Darby. The writer then hinted that perpetual seclusion in a convent, together with the forfeiture of all her estates, would be the consequence, if she could not contrive to fly immediately: but that, if she could, her person, at least, would be at liberty, and that a friend would watch over her property; and, as a conclusion, he advised her to leave Richmond by water, as the means which would leave the least trace of her course.

So singularly did this letter anticipate not only her own fears, but also her own plans, that it instantly acquired, in the eyes of Lady Constance, an authenticity which it did not otherwise possess; and placing it in the hands of Dr. Wilbraham, she asked his opinion upon its contents.

"Pshaw!" cried the clergyman, when he had read it; "pshaw! lady, it is all nonsense! The very reverend Lord Cardinal will never try to make you marry against your will. Do not frighten yourself about it, my dear lady; depend on it.

'tis all nonsense.—Let me see it again." But after he had read it over once more, Dr. Wilbraham's opinion seemed in some degree to change. He considered the letter, and reconsidered it, with very thoughtful eyes, and then declared it was strange, that any one should write it, unless it were true; and yet he would not believe that either. "Pray, lady, have you any idea who wrote it?" demanded he.

"I can imagine but one person," said Lady Constance, "who could possess the knowledge and would take the pains. —Margaret, leave us," she continued, turning to the waiting-woman. "I have heard, my dear Dr. Wilbraham," she proceeded, as soon as they were alone, "that you were in former times acquainted with an old Knight, called Sir Cesar—I met him yesterday when I was out in the park—" Lady Constance paused, and a slight blush came into her cheek, as she remembered that the good clergyman knew nothing of the affection which subsisted between herself and Darnley; and feeling a strong repugnance to say that he was with her at the moment, she hesitated, not knowing how to proceed.

Dr. Wilbraham relieved her, however, by exclaiming, the instant she stopped: "Oh, yes, lady, in truth I know him well! He was the dearest and the best friend of my Lord Fitzbernard; and though unhappily given to strange and damnable pursuits—God forgive him—I must say, he was a friend to all the human race, and a man to be trusted and esteemed.—But think you this letter came from him?"

"He is the only one," replied Constance, "on whom my mind could for a moment fix, as having written it."

"It is very likely," answered the clergyman: "it is very likely; and if it comes from him, you may believe every word that it contains. His knowledge, lady, is strange—is very strange—and is more than good—but it is sure.—He is one of those restless spirits that must ever be busy; and human knowledge not being sufficient for his eager mind, he has sought more than he should seek, and found more than is for the peace of his soul."

"But if he make a good use of his knowledge," said Constance, "surely it cannot be very wicked, my dear sir?"

"It is presumptuous, lady," replied the clergyman; "it is most presumptuous, to seek what God has concealed from our poor nature."

"But if this letter be from him," said the lady, "and the bad tidings that it brings be true, what ought I to do? You, whom my dear father left with me, asking you never to quit

me! you must be my adviser, and tell me what to do in this emergency; for sure I am, that you will never advise me to marry a man that I do not love, and who does not even love me."

"No, no, Heaven forbid! especially when you would rather marry Osborne," said the good clergyman, with the utmost simplicity, looking upon it quite as a matter of course, which required no particular delicacy of handling: "And a much better thing too, lady, in every respect," he continued, seeing that he had called up a blush in Constance's cheek, and fancying that it arose from a fear of his disapproving her choice. "If you will tell the Lord Cardinal all the circumstances, depend upon it he will not press you to do any thing you dislike. Let him have the whole history, my dear lady: tell him that you do not love Lord Darby, and that he loves another; and then show him how dearly Darnley loves you, and how you love him in return; and then—"

"Oh, hush, hush! my dear Dr. Wilbraham," cried the lady, with the blood glowing through her fair clear skin, over neck, and face, and forehead. "Impossible! indeed, quite impossible!—You forget."

"Oh yes, yes, I did forget," replied the chaplain; "Osborne does not wish his name to be known—I did forget. Very true! That is unfortunate.—But cannot you just insinuate that you do love some one else, but do not like to mention his name?"

Lady Constance now endeavoured to make the simple clergyman understand, that under any circumstances she would be obliged to limit her reply to the Cardinal to a plain refusal to wed Lord Darby; and though he could not enter into any feelings of reluctance on her part to avow her regard for Darnley, yet he fully comprehended that she was bound to hold undivulged the confidence of others. However, he did not cease to lament that this was the case, fully convinced in his own mind, that if she had been able to inform Wolsey of every thing, the prelate, whom he judged after his own heart, would have unhesitatingly accorded his sanction to all her wishes: whereas, at present, her refusal might be attributed to obstinacy, being unsupported by any reasons: and thus indeed, he observed, Sir Cesar's prediction might be fulfilled, and she obliged to fly to screen herself from the consequences. Dr. Wilbraham having admitted that there might be a necessity for flight, the mind of Constance was infinitely quieted; that being a point on which she had long, long wished to ascertain

his opinion, yet had timidly held back, believing him to be unacquainted with the most powerful motive that actuated her. Nothing now remained but to learn whether he would so far sanction her proceedings as to accompany her; and she was considering the best means of proposing it to him, when she received a message to inform her that the Cardinal waited her in the little tapestried hall.

The moment which was to decide her fate, she plainly perceived to be now arrived; but, with all the gentle sweetness of her character, a fund of dauntless resolution had descended to her from a long line of warlike ancestors, which failed not to come to her aid in moments of danger and extremity; and though she had long dreaded the interview to which she was now called, she prepared to undergo it with courage and firmness. In obedience to the Cardinal's command, then, she descended to the hall, accompanied by two of her women, who, though neither likely to suffer any thing themselves, nor informed of their mistress's situation, yet felt much more alarm at the thoughts of approaching the imperious Wolsey, than even she did herself, burthened as her mind was with the certainty of offending a man, the limit of whose power it was not easy to define.

At the door of the hall stood two of the Cardinal's ushers, by whom she was introduced into the chamber to which Wolsey had retired after leaving the King, and where, seated in a chair of state, he waited her approach with many an ensign of his pomp and power about him. As she entered, he fixed his eye upon her, scarcely rising from his seat, but still slightly bending his head in token of salutation. The high blood of De Grey, however, though flowing in a woman's veins, and one of the gentlest of her sex, was not made to humble itself before the upstart prelate; and moving forward unbidden, Lady Constance calmly seated herself in a chair opposite to that of the Cardinal, while her women placed themselves behind her, and thus, in silence, she waited for him to speak.

"Lady," said Wolsey, when she was seated, "at the time I saw you last, I proposed to you a marriage, which in point of rank, of fortune, and of every other accessory circumstance, is one which may well be counted among the best of the land, and for which I expected to have your thanks. Instead thereof, however, I received, at the moment of my departure for York, a letter wherein with a mild obstinacy and a humble pride, you did reject what was worthy of your best gratitude. A month now has waned since then, and I trust that calm reflec-

tion has restored you to your sense of what is right; which being the case, all that is past shall be pardoned and forgot."

"Your proposal, my Lord Cardinal," replied Lady Constance, "was doubtless intended for my happiness, and therein you have my most sincere gratitude; but yet I see not how I can have merited either reproof or pardon, in a matter which, alone concerning myself, no one can judge of but myself."

"You speak amiss, lady," said Wolsey, haughtily; "ay, and very boldly do you speak. Am I not your guardian by the English law, and are you not my ward?—say, lady, say!"

"I am your ward, my Lord," replied Lady Constance, her spirit rising under his oppression, "but not your slave—you are my guardian, but not my master."

"You are nice in your refinements, lady," said the Cardinal; "but if I am your guardian, I am to judge what is good for you, till such time as the law permits you to judge for yourself."

"That time is within one month, my Lord," answered Constance; "and even were it longer, I never yet did hear, that a guardian could force a ward to wed against her will; though I at once acknowledge his right to forbid her marriage, where he may judge against it."

"Nay!" exclaimed Wolsey, "this is somewhat too much. This bold spirit, lady, becomes you not, and must be abated. Learn, that though I, in gentleness, rule you but as a ward, and, for your own good, control your stubborn will, the King, your sovereign, may act with a stronger hand, and, heedless of your idle fancies, compel you to obey."

"Then to the King, my sovereign, I appeal," said Constance, "sure that his justice and his clemency will yield me that protection which, God help me, I much need."

"Your appeal is in vain, proud girl!" cried the Cardinal, rising angrily, while the fiery spirit flashed forth from his dark eye. "I stand here armed in this case with the King's power, and commissioned to speak his will; and 'tis in his name that I command you, on Thursday next, at God's altar, to give your hand to your noble cousin, Lord Darby—ay! and gratefully to give it, without which you may fall to beggary and want; for know, that all those broad lands which now so swell your pride, are claimed by Sir Payan Wileton, in right of male descent, and may pass away like a shadow from your feeble hand, leaving you nought but your vanity for dowry."

"*Then let* them pass," said Constance firmly; "for I would

sooner a thousand times be landless, friendless, hopeless, than wed a man I do not love."

"And end your days in a nunnery, you should have added to the catalogue of woes you call upon your head," said the Cardinal, sternly; "for as I live, such shall be your fate.—Choose either to give your vows to your cousin, or to Heaven, lady; for no other choice shall be left you.—Till Thursday next I give you to decide; and while you ponder, York Place shall be your abode.—Lady, no more;" he added, seeing her about to speak; "I have not time to argue against your fine wit. To-night, if I reach Westminster in time, I will send down your litter; if not, to-morrow, by eight of the clock; and be you prepared—I have done."

Constance would not trust her voice with any reply, for the very efforts she made to conceal her agitation had but served to render it more overpowering; and it was now ready to burst forth in tears. Repressing them, however, she rose, and bending her head to the Cardinal, returned to her own apartments. Here Dr. Wilbraham awaited her in no small anxiety, to know the event of her conference with Wolsey, which, as it had been so short, he judged must be favourable. Lady Constance soon undeceived him, however; and shocked and indignant at the Cardinal's haughty and tyrannical conduct, he agreed at once with the lady that she had no resource but flight.

"It is very strange! very, strange, indeed!" cried the good man; "I have often heard that the Lord Cardinal is haughty and cruel,—and indeed men lay to his charge that he never does any thing but for his own interests; but I would never believe it before. I thought that God would never have placed so much power in the hands of so bad a man: but his ways are inscrutable; and his name be praised! Now, my dear lady, what is to be done? Where are we to go? Had not I better go and tell Osborne, that he may know all about it?"

"On no account," replied Constance; "however painful it may be, my good friend,—and painful indeed it is, I acknowledge,"—and while she spoke the long repressed tears burst forth, and rolled rapidly over her face,—"I must go without even bidding him adieu. I would not for the world involve him at this time in a business which might bring about his ruin. He shall be innocent even of the knowledge of my flight, so that Wolsey shall have no plea against him. When his fate is fixed, and the storm is blown away, I will let him know where I am; for I owe him that at least.—Even for you, my good Dr. Wilbraham, I fear," she continued. "If you fly with me,

may it not bring down upon your head some ecclesiastical censure? If so, for Heaven's sake, let me go with Margaret alone."

"Why it may, indeed," answered the chaplain, thoughtfully. "I had forgot that. It may indeed. What can be done?"

"Then you shall stay," replied Lady Constance, with some degree of mournfulness of accent at the thought of the friendless loneliness with which she was going to cast herself upon the wide inhospitable world. "Then you shall stay indeed."

"What! and leave you to wander about alone, I know not whither?" cried the good clergyman. "No, my child, no! Did all the dangers in the world hang over my head, where you go, there will I go too. If I cannot protect you much, which, God help me! is not in my power, at least I can console you under your sorrows, and support you during your pilgrimage, by pointing continually to that Being who is the protector of the widow and the orphan, the friend of the friendless and the desolate—Lady, I will go with you. All the dangers in the world shall not scare me from your side."

A new energy seemed to have sprung up in the bosom of the clergyman; and by his advice and assistance Lady Constance's plans and arrangements for her flight were very soon completed.

It was agreed that herself, Dr. Wilbraham, and Mistress Margaret, the waiting-woman, should immediately take boat, and proceed by water to the little village of Tothill, from whence a walk of five minutes would bring them to the house of the physician Dr. Butts, who, as the old chaplain observed, was, though his nephew, a man of an active and piercing mind, and would probably find some means to facilitate their escape to France. By landing some little way from his house, they hoped to prevent their route from being traced afterward, and thus to evade pursuit; as to be overtaken and brought back, would involve far more danger than even to remain where they were and dare the worst.

All this being determined between Lady Constance and the clergyman, Mistress Margaret was called in, and informed of as much of the plan as was necessary to enable her to make up her mind whether she would accompany her young lady or not. Without a moment's hesitation, she decided upon going, and having received her orders, proceeded to arrange for their journey such articles of apparel as were absolutely necessary, together with all her lady's money and jewels. She also was deputed to inform the other servants, that Lady Constance

thought it best to follow the Lord Cardinal to York Place immediately, instead of waiting for the litter which he had promised to send, and that she only permitted herself and Dr. Wilbraham to accompany her.

Every thing being ready, a man was sought to carry the two large bags, to which their baggage was restricted; and Constance prepared to put in execution the very important step on which she had determined. Her heart sank, it is true, and her spirit almost failed, as Dr. Wilbraham took her by the hand to lead her to the boat; but remembering to what she would expose herself if she stayed, she recalled her courage, and proceeded on her way.

In the antechamber, however, she had a painful scene to go through, for her women, not deceived by Mrs. Margaret's tale, clung round their mistress for what they deemed might be a last farewell. All of them, born upon her father's lands, had grown up as it were with her; and, for some good quality, called from among the other peasantry to the honour of serving the heiress of De Grey, had become attached to her by early habit, as well as by the affection which her gentle manners and sweet disposition were certain to produce in all those by whom she was surrounded. Many a bitter tear was shed by the poor girls as they saw their lady about to leave them; and Constance herself, unable to refrain from weeping, thereby not only encouraged their grief, but confirmed their fears.—Angry with herself for giving way to her feelings when she felt the absolute necessity of governing them strictly, Constance gently disengaged herself from her maids, and promising to let them hear of her soon, proceeded to the water-side, where they easily procured a boat to convey them down the river.

The irrevocable step was now taken, and Constance and the chaplain both sat in silence, contemplating the vague future, and striving, amid all the dim uncertain shapes that it presented, to ascertain even, as far as probability went, what might be their own fate. But the dark impenetrable curtain that hung over between to-day and to-morrow, still barred their view, leaving only room for hope and fear to range within the wide circle of unceasing doubt.

Long before arriving at Tothill, the sun had gone down; and the cold wind blowing from the river, chilled Lady Constance as she sat in the open boat without any other covering than a long veil added to her ordinary apparel. Notwithstanding this, she judged it best to bid their rowers continue their course as far as Westminster, fearing that the little knowledge of the localities possessed either by Dr. Wilbraham or herself,

might cause them to lose their way if they pursued their original intention of landing at Tothill, and hoping that the darkness, which was now coming thick upon them, would at least conceal their path from the boat to the house of Dr. Butts.—To ensure this, as soon as they landed, Mrs. Margaret took one of the bags, and the good clergyman the other, and having satisfied the boatmen for their labour, the whole party began to thread the narrow tortuous lanes and streets, constituting the good town of Westminster.

After various turnings and windings, however, they discovered that they were not on the right track, and were obliged to ask their way of an old locksmith, who was just shutting up his shop. The direction they received from the worthy artificer was somewhat confused, and contained so many *rights* and *lefts*, that by the time they had taken two more turnings, each person of the three had got a different reading of the matter, and could in no way agree as to their farther proceeding.

"He said we were to go on, in this street, till we came to a lantern, I am sure," said Dr. Wilbraham.

"No, no, Sir," cried Mrs. Margaret, "it was the next street after we had turned to the left. Did he not say, take the first street to the right, and then the first again to the right, and then the second to the left, and then go on till we came to a lantern?"

Dr. Wilbraham denied the position; and the matter was only terminated by Constance proposing that they should proceed to the second turning at least. "Then if we see a light in the street to the left," she continued, "we may reasonably suppose that that is the turning he meant, unless before that we find a lantern here too, and then we can but ask again.—But make haste, my dear Dr. Wilbraham, for there is a man behind who seems as if he were watching us!"

This last observation quickened all their motions, and, proceeding as fast as possible, they found that Mrs. Margaret was in the right; for immediately in the centre of the second turning to the left appeared a lantern, shedding its dim small light down the long perspective of the street: which, be it remarked, was highly favoured in having such an appendage; few and scanty being the lights that, in that age, illuminated the streets of London after dark. Pursuing their way, then, towards this brilliant luminary, with many a look behind to ascertain whether they were followed, which did not appear to be the case, they found another street diverging to the right, which shared in the beneficent rays of the lantern, and which,

also, conducted into a known latitude, namely a little, sort of square, that the chaplain instantly recognised as being in the immediate proximity of his nephew's dwelling.

The house of Dr. Butts now soon presented itself; and entering the little court before it, the clergyman was just about to knock against a door which fronted them, when some one, entering the court from the street, laid hold of his arm, saying, "Stop, stop! if you please! you must come with me to my Lord Cardinal."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Come with words as medicinal as true,
Honest as either."

SHAKSPEARE.

Now there are many people who would here leave their reader in suspense, and, darting off to some other part of the tale, would not give the most remote hint of Lady Constance's fate, till they had drawled through two or three long chapters about a frog and a roasted apple, or any other thing, if possible, still more irrelevant. But far be such disingenuous dealing from me, whose sole aim, intent, and object is to give my reader pleasure; and by now and then detailing some little accident or adventure, to keep him just enough awake to prevent the volume falling out of his hand into the fire; to win sometimes a smile, and sometimes a sigh; without aspiring either to laughter or tears; tickling his soul, as it were, with the point of a feather, so as neither to rouse nor to lull, and to leave him in such a state, that when he lays down the book, he knows not whether he has been reading or dreaming.

Such are the luxurious aspirations of Vonderbrugius, who is recorded to have himself written more than one volume in his sleep, and to have carried them even to the printer in a state of somnambulency. After this, without more ado, he proceeds to relate, that the worthy Dr. Wilbraham, finding somebody take him by the arm, turned round in a state of vexation and worry, if I may use the word, which overcame the natural gentleness of his disposition, and made him demand, rather sharply, what the stranger wanted with him.

"Why, Doctor," replied the man, "you must come instantly

to my Lord Cardinal, who has been struck with the pestilent air in returning from Richmond, and desires to consult with you on the means of preventing its bad effects."

"Pshaw!" cried the good chaplain, pettishly, "I am not Dr. Butts! How could you frighten me so? We come to see the Doctor ourselves."

"Stand out of the way, then, if you are not him," cried the man, changing his tone, and rudely pushing between the clergyman and Lady Constance. "The Cardinal must be served first, before such as you, at least;" and knocking loudly against the door, he soon brought forth a page, who informed him that the physician was at the house of old Sir Guy Willoughby, further down in the same street.

On this news, the messenger immediately set off again, leaving Dr. Wilbraham to discuss what matters he liked with the page, now that his own insolent haste was satisfied. The servants instantly recognised their master's uncle, and permitted him, with his fair companions, to enter and take possession of his book-room, while awaiting his return; and the rosy maid, whom Sir Osborne had found scrubbing crucibles, now bustled about with good-humoured activity to make the lady comfortable.

Long seemed the minutes, however, to the mind of poor Constance, till the physician's return. Her path was now entirely amid uncertainties, and at each step she knew not whether it would lead her to safety or destruction. Such a proceeding as that in which she was engaged does not strike one, when calmly related, as full of half the anxiety and alarm that really accompanied it. Let it be remembered, that not only her fortune, but her liberty for life, and the whole happiness of her existence, were involved; and it may be then conceived with what trembling fear she awaited each incident that might tend to forward her escape, or to betray her flight.

Though it seemed to her an age, Dr. Butts was not really long in returning; but no language can depict the astonishment of his countenance, when he beheld Lady Constance with his uncle. "Odds life!" cried he; "what is this? Lady, are you ill, or well, or wise?—Uncle, are you mad, or drunk, or foolish?"

The good clergyman informed him that he was in neither of the predicaments that he alluded to; and then proceeded to relate the circumstances and motives which had induced them to resolve upon leaving the court of England and flying to France, to claim the protection of the French king, who

was in fact the lady's sovereign as far as regarded her maternal estates.

"It's a bad business!" cried Dr. Butts, who still stood in the middle of the floor, rubbing his chin, and not yet recovered from his surprise. "It's a bad business! I always thought it would be a bad business! Nay, nay, lady, do not weep," continued the kind-hearted mediciner, seeing the tears that began to roll silently over Constance's cheek: "It is not so bad as that. Wolsey will doubtless claim you at the hands of the French king; but Francis is not a man to give you up. However, take my advice—retire quietly to one of your chateaux, and live like a nun, till such time as this great friendship between the two courts is past. It will not last long," he added, with a sententious shake of the head; "it will not last long. But, nevertheless, you keep yourself in France, as secretly as may be, while it does last."

"But how to get to France is the question," said Dr. Wilbraham. "We shall do well enough when we are there, I doubt not. It is how to get to France, that we must think of."

"Oh, we will manage that," replied Dr. Butts; "we will manage that; though, indeed, these are not things that I like to meddle with; but nevertheless, I suppose I must in this case. Nay, nay, my dear lady, do not grieve. 'Slife! you a soldier's daughter, and afraid! Nay, cheer up, cheer up. It shall all go right, I warrant."

The Doctor now seated himself, and observing that Constance looked pale and cold, he insisted on her swallowing a Venice glass of mulled sack, and going to bed. As to the sack, he said, he would ensure it for the best in Europe; and in regard to the beds in his house, he could only say, that he had once entertained the four most famous alchymists of the world, and they were not men to sleep on hard beds. "Taste the sack, lady; taste the sack!" he continued. "Believe me, it is the best medicine in the pharmacy, and certainly the only one I ever take myself. Then, while you go and court your pillow, I will devise some scheme with this good uncle of mine to help you over the Frenchman's shore."

The physician's rosy maid was now called, and conducted Lady Constance and Mrs. Margaret to a handsome bed-chamber, where we shall leave them for the present; and without prying into Dr. Butt's household [illegible], return to the consultation that was now going on be[illegible]

"Well, uncle," said the physician, as soon as Lady Constance had left them, "you have shown your wisdom truly in

running away with an heiress for another man. On my life, you have beaten the man who was hanged for his friend, saying that he would do as much for him another time. Why, do you know, you can never show your face in England again?"

"My good nephew," replied Dr. Wilbraham, quietly, "for all your fine words, if you had been in my situation, you would have done just as I have done.—I know you, Charles."

"Not I, i'faith," cried Dr. Butts: "I would not have budged a foot."

"What! when you saw her cast upon the world, friendless and helpless," cried the old man, "with nobody to advise her, with nobody to aid her, with nobody to console her? So sweet a girl, too! such an angel in heart, in mind, in disposition—all desolate, and alone, in this wide, rough world!—Fie, Charles, fie! You would have gone with her!"

"Perhaps I might, perhaps I might," replied the physician; "however, let us now think of the best means of serving her. What can be done?"

As usual in such cases, fifty plans were propounded, which, on examination were found to be unfeasible. "I have it," cried Dr. Butts, at last, after discarding an infinite variety: "there was a nun's litter came up yesterday, to the inn hard by. It will hold three; and you shall set off to-morrow by daybreak as nuns."

"But how?" cried Dr. Wilbraham, with horror and astonishment depicted in his face. "You don't mean me to go as a nun?"

"Faith, but I do!" replied the physician; "it would be fully as bad for you to be discovered, as for Lady Constance. Now, there is no dress in the world, that I know of, but a nun's, that will cover your face, and hide your beard.—Oh, you shall be a nun, by all means. I will get the three dresses this very night, from a frippery in Pool-street. I will knock them up, and you shall be well shaved to-morrow morning, and will make as fine an old sister monica as the best of them."

Dr. Wilbraham still held out stoutly, declaring that he would not so disguise himself, and disgrace his cloth, on any account or consideration; nor was it till the physician showed him plainly, that by this means alone Lady Constance's safety could be ensured, that he would at all hear of the travesty thus proposed.

"Where, then, do you intend us to go?" asked Dr. Wilbraham, almost crying with vexation, at the idea of being so metamorposed. "I cannot, and I will not, remain long in such

"Why, you must go down to Sandwich," answered the physician. "There is a religious house there, under a sub-prioress, about a mile out of the town, looking out over the sea. I know the dame, and a little money will do much with her. Nay, look not so shocked, good uncle. I mean not to say that she is wicked, and would endanger her soul's repose for mammon; but she is one of those that look leniently on small faults, and would not choke at such an innocent sin as helping you out of the Cardinal's power. The time is lucky, too, for the cold wind last night has given his haughty Lord Cardinalship a flow of humours to the head, and he is as frightened about himself as a hen before a dray horse; so that, perhaps, he may not think of sending to Richmond so soon as he proposed."

"But, Charles," said Dr. Wilbraham, whose abhorrence of the nun's dress was not to be vanquished, and who would have been right glad to escape the infliction on any excuse; "will not your servants, who have seen us come in one dress, think it very strange when they see us go away in another?—and may they not betray us?"

"Pshaw!" cried Dr. Butts, "they see a thousand odder things every day, in a physician's house. Do you think I let my servants babble? No, no! They know well, that they must have neither eyes, ears, nor understanding, for any thing that passes within these doors. If I were to find that they ever did so much as to recollect a person they had once seen with me, they should troop. But stay: go you to bed and rest. I will away for these dresses and bespeak the litter for to-morrow, at five.—At Sandwich you are sure to find a bark for Boulogne."

The next morning, Dr. Wilbraham was awoke before it was light, by the physician entering his room with a candle in his hand, and followed by a barber; who, taking the good priest by the nose, shaved him most expeditiously, befor was out of bed, having been informed by Dr. Butts, tha person under his hands was a poor insane patient, who not submit to any very tedious tonsorial operation.

When this was done, much to the surprise of the who was, in truth, scarcely awake, the barber was and the physician produced the long black dres dictine nun, into which, after much entreaty, he persuaded Dr. Wilbraham to get: not, however, without the rest of his clothes; for no argument would induce him to put on the woman's dress, without the man's under it. First, then, he was clothed

with his ordinary black vest, and silk hose, above which came a full and seemly cassock; and then, as a superstructure, was placed on the top of all, the long black robes of the nun, which swelled his bulk out to no inconsiderable size. This, however, was not a disadvantage; for being tall and thin, he had great need of some supposititious contour, to make his height less enormous, when conjoined with his female habiliments. Upon the whole, with the rope tied tight round his middle, and the coif and veil, he made a very respectable nun, though there was in the whole figure a certain long-backed rigidity of carriage, and straggling wideness of step, that smacked infinitely of the masculine gender.

When all was completed, the physician led his transformed uncle down to a little hall, to which Lady Constance and Mrs. Margaret had already found their way, habited in similar garments to those which Dr. Butts had furnished for the chaplain.

In point of beauty, Constance had never, perhaps, looked better than now, when her small exquisite features, and clear delicate complexion, slightly shaded by the nun's cap, had acquired an additional degree of softness, which harmonized well with the pensive melancholy expression that circumstances had communicated to her countenance. However, she was, perhaps, even more sad and agitated than the night before, when haste had, in some degree superseded thought. She had now passed nearly a sleepless night, during the long hours of which a thousand fears and anxieties had visited her pillow, and on rising, the necessity of quitting her customary dress, and assuming a disguise, impressed more strongly than ever upon her mind the dangers of her situation.

The only person that seemed fully in her element, was Mrs. Margaret, who, though, with the exception of a little selfishness, a most excellent being, could not be expected to have fulfilled for several years the high functions of lady's maid, without having acquired some of the spirit of the office. God

Dr in Lady Constance's service, she had possessed small not sonity of exercising, in any way, her talents for even the or consi*gue d'antichambre;* and though, in the case of Sir plainly, the had done her best to show her tact by retiring *à* could be present was the first occasion on which she could enjoy a real, bustling, energetic adventure; and to do her justice, she enacted the part to the life. With a vastly consequential air, she parried about, till the rustling of her black serge, and the rattling of her wooden cross and rosary were

quite edifying; and finding herself by dress at least, on an equality with her mistress, she took the bridle off her tongue, and let it run its own course, which it did not fail to do with great vigour and activity.

On the entrance of Dr. Wilbraham, with his face clad in rueful solemnity, and his long strides, at every step spreading out the petticoats with which his legs were environed, like the parachute of a balloon when it begins to descend, Mrs. Margaret laughed outright, and even Lady Constance, while reproving her for her ill-placed gayety, could hardly forbear a smile.

"My dear Dr. Wilbraham," said Constance, seeing the chagrin that sat upon his countenance, "for how much, how very much, have I to thank you! And believe me, I feel deeply all the regard you must have for me, to induce you to assume a disguise that must be so disagreeable to you."

"Well," said Dr. Butts, "you are a sweet creature, and to my mind it would not be difficult to make a man do any thing to serve you. However, sit you down, lady; here is something to break your fast; and as it must serve for dinner and supper too, I will have you eat, whether you are hungry or not; for there must be as little stopping on the road as possible, and no chattering, Mrs. Margaret; mind you that."

Mrs. Margaret vowed that she was silence itself; and the meal which the good Doctor's foresight had taken care to provide for them, being ended, he led them forth by a different door from that which had given them entrance, not choosing to trust even the servants, whose discretion he had boasted the night before. Day had now dawned, and in the court-yard of the inn they found a large litter, or sort of long box, swung between two horses, one before and the other behind, and accompanied by a driver on horseback, who, smacking his whip, seemed tired of waiting for them.

"Come, get in, get in," cried he, "I have been waiting half an hour. There's room enough for you, sure!" he proceeded, seeing some little difficulty occur in placing the travellers. "why, I brought four just like you up from Gloucester in it, three days ago.—Here, come over to this side, Mother Longshanks." This address to Dr. Wilbraham had again very nearoverset Mrs. Margaret's gravity; but at length all being placed, in spite of the chaplain's long legs, which were rather difficult to pack, the travellers took leave of the physician, and commenced their journey to the seacoast.

All passed on tranquilly enough during the forenoon; and

at a little watering-house, where they stopped on the road, they were enabled quietly to rehearse their parts, as Sister Wilbraham, Sister Margaret, and Sister Grey. The good clergyman declared, that his part should be to keep down his veil and hold his tongue, and Mrs. Margaret willingly undertook to be the talker for the whole party, while Constance, not yet at all assured of safety, listened for every sound with a beating heart, and trembled at every suspicious look that she beheld, or fanced that she beheld, in the people round her.

As soon as the horses were sufficiently refreshed, they again began their journey, and had proceeded some way, when the galloping of a horse made itself heard behind them, and through the opening of the curtains they could perceive a sergeant-at-arms, with full cognizance, and accompanied by two followers, pass by the side of their vehicle. In a moment after, he stopped, on overtaking their driver, who was a little in advance, and seemed to question him in a hasty tone. "Three nuns!" cried he, at length, "I must see that!"

Constance, almost fainting, drew back in the corner of the litter. Dr. Wilbraham shrunk himself up to the smallest space possible; and, in fact, Mrs. Margaret was the only one who preserved her presence of mind. "If it were the Lord Cardinal himself," whispered she to her lady, "he would never know you, my Lady, in that dress."

In the mean time, the sergeant-at-arms rode up, and drew back the curtain of the litter. "Your pardon, ladies," said he, giving a look round which seemed quite satisfactory, "I ask your pardon; but as I am sent in pursuit of some runaways, I was obliged to look in."

Here the matter would have terminated, had not Mrs. Margaret, desirous of showing off a total want of fear, replied, "Quite welcome, fair Sir, quite welcome. We are travelling the same road." The officer replied; and this brought on a long allegory on the part of Mrs. Margaret, who told him that they were nuns of Richborough, who had been to London for medical advice for poor sister Mary, there, in the corner (pointing to Dr. Wilbraham), who was troubled with the falling sickness. The sergeant-at-arms recommended woodlice drowned in vinegar, as a sovereign cure, which the pretended nun informed him they had tried; and though it must be owned that the abigail played her part admirably well, yet, nevertheless, she contrived to keep her lady and the chaplain in mortal fear for half an hour longer than was necessary.

At length, however, the officer, taking his leave, rode away:

and then descended upon the head of Mrs. Margaret, the whole weight of good Dr. Wilbraham's indignation. Not for many years had he preached such an eloquent sermon upon the duty of adhering strictly to truth, as on the present occasion; and he pointed clearly out to the waiting woman, that she had told at least two-and-thirty lies more than the circumstances required. Mrs. Margaret, however, was obstinate in her error, and would not see the distinction, declaring angrily, that she would either tell no lies at all, and let it be known who they were, or she would tell as many as she thought proper.

"Margaret!" said Lady Constance, in a calm reproachful tone, that had more effect than a more violent reproof, "you forget yourself." The abigail was silent; but nevertheless, she determined, in her own mind, to give the good Doctor more truth than he might like, on the very first occasion; and such an opportunity was not long in occurring.

With the usual hankering which drivers and postillions always have for bad inns, the master of the litter did not fail to stop for the night at one of the smallest, meanest, and most uncomfortable little alehouses on the road; and on getting out of the vehicle, the three nuns were all shown into one room, containing two beds, one large, and one small one. It may easily be supposed that such an arrangement did not very well suit the circumstances of the case; and Constance looked at Dr. Wilbraham, and Dr. Wilbraham at Constance, in some embarrassment. On inquiring whether they could not have another room, they were informed that there was indeed such a thing in the house, but that it was always reserved for guests of quality. The hostess was surprised at nuns giving themselves such airs: the room they had would do very well for three people—and, in short, that they should have no other.

During all this time, Mrs. Margaret remained obstinately silent, but at length, seeing the distress of her mistress, she brought up her forces to the charge, and turned the tide of battle. Attacking the hostess full tilt, she declared that there should be another room found directly, informing her, that the young lady was not a simple nun, but noble and rich, and just named Prioress of, the Lord knows where; that Sister Mary —*i. e.* Dr. Wilbraham, was badly troubled with a night-cough, which would keep the Prioress awake all night; and in short, that Sister Mary must, and should, have a room to herself, for which, however, they would willingly pay.

This latter hint overcame the hostess's objections, and the matter being thus settled, they were allowed to repose in

peace for the night. Fatigue, anxiety, and want of sleep, had now completely exhausted Constance; and weariness acting the part of peace, closed her eyes in happy forgetfulness, till the next morning, when they again set out for Sandwich.

Without any new adventure, they arrived at that town; and after passing through it, quickly perceived the convent rising on a slight elevation to the left. As soon as this was in sight, so that he could not miss his way, Dr. Wilbraham got out of the litter, for the purpose of pulling off his nun's dress under some hedge, in order that, by following a little later than themselves, he might appear at the gate of the nunnery in his true character, without the change being remarked by the driver of the litter, to whom he said in descending that he would follow on foot.

After this, Constance and Mrs. Margaret proceeded alone, and in a few minutes reached the convent, where presenting Dr. Butt's letter to the Prioress, they were received with all kindness and attention, and found themselves comparatively free from danger. Dr. Wilbraham was not long in arriving, restored to his proper costume; and being admitted to the parlour, entered into immediate consultation with the Superior and Constance, as to the best means of concluding their flight as happily as it had commenced.

CHAPTER IX.

So catchers
And snatchers
Do toile both night and day.
Not needie,
But greedie,
Still proling for their prey.

However a poor novelist may like to pursue the even tenor of his way in peace and quietness, it is quite impossible for him to do so, if he take a true story for the basis of his tale. Circumstance is always jumping about; and if he would follow Nature, he must join in the game of leap-frog too. Here, is the Palace of Fortune, with its glitter, and its splendour, and its show; and there the Cottage of Want, with its care, and its foulness, and its misery. In one house, new-born life is coming into the world, all joyous; in the next, stern

death leads man away to eternity: weeping sorrow, and laughing joy, sit mocking each other at every step; and smiles, and tears, are still running after each other on the high road, though little formed to bear company together. Since, then, the world is full of oppositions and of jumps, he that copies it must sit upon his hind legs, and play the kangaroo also.

I found it necessary to put forth this excuse, before proceeding with Vonderbrugius; who, without offering any reason for so doing, suddenly flies back to scenes that we have not long quitted, and brings the reader once more to London, where he shall be detained as short a time as possible, on the word of a scribe.

All those who have read the history of that little powerful nook of island earth, called Great Britain, must very well know, that the imperious minister of Henry the Eighth was not one to receive contradiction with patient resignation: what then was his rage on hearing that Lady Constance de Grey was not to be found at Greenwich? True to what he threatened, Wolsey had not failed, immediately on arriving in London, to send a horse-litter down to Richmond for his fair ward, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, and the cold he had himself experienced on the water; and towards eleven the same night, his messengers returned, informing him that the lady was not to be found in the palace; adding also, that a man belonging to the gate had been employed to carry some luggage for her down to a two-oared boat, which had received her at the stairs, and rowed off towards Westminster.

This was the sum of all the news they had obtained, but it was sufficient to guide Wolsey on the search which he instantly prepared to institute for the fugitive. Before going to rest, he took every precaution for preventing her leaving the kingdom, ordered messengers to set out early the next morning for every port where she was likely to embark, and commanded an officer to post to Richmond that very night, and stationing himself at the palace-stairs, to await the arrival of the men who rowed the boat which had conveyed her away, giving him at the same time an order for their arrest.

In regard to the couriers to the various ports, we shall leave them to their fate, not embarrassing ourselves with a search half over the realm, but shall pursue the movements of the other messenger, from whose operations very important results were obtained.

Though heartily wishing the Cardinal and Lady Constance at the devil, the one as the proximate, the other as the remote

cause of his night-ride, the officer got into his saddle, and accompanied by two followers, set out for Richmond, where they arrived towards two o'clock in the morning.

Men of a curious and philosophic mind have remarked, that there is always a pot-house near a waterman's stairs; and the same fact was observable in the present instance. Nearly opposite to the landing on the left-hand side, stood the hospitable mansion of a beer-retailer, who dealt out the British nectar to all those who had the means of paying for it; and in his window, even at the hour of two o'clock, was shining a lamp, whereat the officer marvelled, as the neighbourhood of the palace enjoined order and sobriety among the multitude. Riding up, however, he dismounted: and pushing open the door, perceived that the tap-room was occupied by a single individual of the waterman species, whose sleepy head, nodding backwards and forwards, often approached so near the lamp upon the table, as to threaten his red nose with a conflagration. Without any regard for the rights of Morpheus, the officer shook the sleeper heartily by the shoulder, whereupon he started up, crying, "Well, I'm ready—how long you've been—I've been a waiting this hour."

"Waiting for whom?" demanded the officer; "not for me, I'm sure, or with my will, you'd waited long enough."

"Lord bless us, Sir! I beg your worship's pardon," said the man, rubbing his eyes; "I thought you were the two yeomen that hired my boat to take the young lady to Lunnun. They promised to be back by one, and so master tapster lets me sit up here for 'em. I thought you were them two indeed."

"No, I'm a single man, and never was two in my life," answered the officer. "But about these two yeomen?—At one o'clock you say they were to come?—Pray, how came you to let them your boat?"

"Lord! because they asked me, sure," replied the waterman, "that's how."

"But how do you know they will ever bring it back again?" demanded the officer.

"Because they left me ten marks as a pledge," answered the other. "No, no, I wasn't to be outwitted. I saw they wanted the boat very bad, so I let them have it for a mark by the day; but I made them leave me ten others; so if the boat be lost or hurt, I've got double its worth in my own pocket."

"And what did they say they were going to do with it?" demanded the officer.

"Oh, I didn't ask," said the waterman; "but walking about,

I saw them lay there at the stairs for near an hour, till presently comes down a young lady, and an old priest, and a waiting-woman, as I judged, and in they get, and away rows the boat towards Lunnun. They were lusty rowers, I warrant you, and good at the trade. But your worship seems mighty curious about them."

"Ay, and so curious," answered the officer, "that they shall both go with me to London, if they come hither to-night; and you too, Master Waterman, so hold yourself ready. Ho, Thomas! come in and stay with this worthy. See that he does not budge. You Will, put up the horses, and then come down to me at the stairs."

The excellent tipstaff now, after cutting short the remonstrance of the boatman, proceeded to the water side, and crossing his arms, waited, with his eyes fixed upon the bright river, as it flowed on, rippling like waves of silver in the moonshine. In a few minutes he was joined by his follower, and before long a black spot appeared moving up the midst of the stream, while the plashing of distant oars began to make itself heard. As the boat came nearer, two men were plainly to be seen rowing it towards the landing-place, one of whom raising his head, when they were within a few yards' distance, exclaimed, "Is that you, Master Perkins?"

"Ay, ay!" answered the officer, imitating, as well as he could, the gruff halloo of a waterman, and walking about with his hands in his breeches' pockets, as if to keep himself warm.

Without more ado, the boat pulled to the shore, and one of the men jumped out, whereupon the officer instantly caught him by the collar, exclaiming, "In the king's name, I charge you go with me."

"Pull off! pull off," cried the man to his companion; "by the Lord, he has grabbed me—pull off, boy!"

The other rower, without scruple, pushed from the shore before the tipstaff's man could secure the bow of the boat; and seeing his companion caught beyond the power of extrication, he snatched up the other oar, and pulled away, down the river, as hard as he could.

"And now, what the devil do you want with me?" cried the man, sturdily, turning to the officer. "Come, off with your hands! Don't be fingering my collar so hard, or I'll crack your nutshell for you." And at the same time he struggled to shake off the other's grasp; but the officer, who seemed accustomed to deal with persons that did not particularly relish his ministry, very soon settled the question with his prisoner, by

striking him a blow over the head, with a staff he carried, in such sort as to level him with the ground. It is wonderful how soothing to the prisoner's feelings this mild treatment seemed to be, for without any farther effort, he suffered himself to be led away to the ale-house, from whence he was safely removed the next morning to Westminster, the original owner of the boat being carried along with him as a witness. And here, let me beg all constables, Bow-street officers, scarlet-runners, street-keepers, constables of the night, and watchmen, who may read this excellent and instructive history, to take example by the prudence of the officer, who, having acquired all the information he could from other sources, wisely abstained from asking his prisoner any questions whatsoever, leaving his examination to be taken by competent persons.

Carrying his game directly to York House, the worthy and exemplary tipstaff, whose name I should not fail record, had not Vonderbrugius unfeelingly omitted it—this prince of tipstaves, I say, placed his charge in a place of security, and on the Cardinal's return from Westminster Hall, informed him of all that he had done to fulfil the mission with which he had honoured him. The Cardinal praised the tipstaff's zeal, and beginning to suspect that there was some mystery in the business, more than the mere course which Constance had taken, he ordered the prisoner, and the evidence, to be brought instantly before him; and proceeded himself to investigate the matter, and to see whether his fingers would be neat enough to pick the needle out of the bottle of hay:—a delicate operation, for which there is but one method, which may be called the Alexandrine; namely, burn the hay, and you are sure to get the needle.

Something similar was the proceeding which the Cardinal proposed to adopt; for no sooner was the prisoner brought before him, rather pale with fright, and somewhat nervous with his night's entertainment, than he pronounced a most eloquent oration upon the necessity of meeting death with firmness, warning the unhappy man, at the same time, that he had nothing to hope in this world, and bidding him to prepare for the next. Through the whole, however, he suffered to appear, implied, though not expressed, the possibility, that a free confession of all the culprit knew, concerning Lady Constance de Grey, and her evasion, might take the sting out of his offence, and disencumber his windpipe of the pressing familiarity with which it was threatened by an hempen cord.

In those times, rights were but little defined, and the extent

of the great civil and political powers hardly ascertained even to the minds of the cultivated and reflecting, much less to people in the rank of the person who now stood before the prelate, surrounded by all those impressive insignia which then, indeed, implied vast, though borrowed power. Without going into the metaphysics of the business, it will be sufficient for my purpose to say, that the poor fellow was desperately frightened, especially as he had upon his conscience more than one hearty crime, which he well knew might at any time prove a sufficient excuse for sending him part of the way to Heaven, whether he ever made the whole journey out or not. Therefore, having no great interest in concealing any thing he knew, and every interest in the world in telling it, he fell down upon his knees, declaring that he would reveal all, if the Cardinal would make a solemn promise that he should have the King's free pardon, and the Church's, for every sin, crime, and misdemeanor, he had committed up to that day.

It cost him nothing but a bit of parchment, and a little yellow wax, and so the cardinal promised; whereupon the culprit, still upon his knees, began as follows:—

"My master, Sir Payan Wileton—"

"Sir Payan Wileton is your master, then?" cried Wolsey—"So, so! Go on."

"My master, Sir Payan Wileton, my gracious lord," continued the man, "after he had been with your grace yesterday morning, returned home full speed to his house by the water's edge, near Tothill, and suddenly despatched one of our yeomen down to Richmond with a poor foolish priest, saving your Grace's presence, who had been with him some days. After that, he wrote a note, and giving it to me, bade me take with me Black John, and gallop down to the court like mad:—Whenever we got there, I was to speak with Hatchel Sivard, whom he had set to spy all that passed at the palace, and who would help me to hire a boat for the day. After that was done, I was to seek the Lady de Grey, and give her the note; and then, leaving our horses at the baiting-house, I and my fellow were to wait in the boat till the lady came, and to row her whithersoever she directed; but, above all, to seem like common watermen, and to take whatever payment she gave us. And if by chance she didn't come, we were to give up the boat, and return."

As may be supposed, Wolsey was not a little surprised at the intrigue which this opened to his view. "So!" said he. "So! Hatchel Sivard, the Page of the Queen's antechamber

is a pensioned spy of Sir Payan Wileton. Good! Very good! —Of course you carried the lady to her relation's house, ha?"

"Not so, may it please your Lordship's Grace," replied the man. "At first, she made as if she would have stopped at Tothill, but then she bade us row on to Westminster, where she landed."

"But you saw where she went," cried Wolsey, his brow darkening. "Mind, your life depends upon your speaking truth! Let me but see a shade of falsehood, and you are lost!"

"As I hope for mercy, my Lord, I tell you the whole truth," replied the servant. "When she was landed, I got out and followed; but, after turning through several streets, I saw that they marked me watching, so I was obliged to run down a narrow lane, hoping to catch them by going round; but they had taken some other way, and I found them not again."

Wolsey let his hand drop heavily upon the table, disappointed in his expectations.—"You say *them*, fellow! Who do you mean?" he demanded. "Who was with her?"

"Her waiting-woman, your Grace," answered the man, "and an old priest, whom Sivard says is her chaplain."

"Ah!" said Wolsey, thoughtfully, "Dr. Wilbraham! This is very strange! A staid good man—obedient to my will—coinciding in the expediency of the marriage I proposed. There must be some deeper plot here of this Sir Payan Wileton. The poor girl must be deceived, and perhaps not so much obstinate as misled.—I see it—I see it all.—The wily traitor seeks her estates, and would fain both stop her marriage and bring her within my displeasure.—A politic scheme, upon my honour; but it shall not succeed.—Secretary, bid an usher speed to Sir Payan Wileton, and, greeting him sweetly, request his presence for a moment here."

It was the latter part of the above speech only that met the ear of those around, the rest being muttered to himself in a low and almost inaudible tone. "Pray, pray, your Lordship's Grace!" cried the man, clasping his hands in terror as soon as he heard Wolsey's command. "Do not let Sir Payan have me. I shall not be alive this time two days, if you do. Indeed I sha'nt. Your Grace does not know him. There is nothing stops him in his will; and I shall be found dead in my bed, or drowned in a pond, or tumbled out of a window, or something like; and then Sir Payan will pretend to make an investigation, and have the crowner, and it will be found all accident. If it is the same to your Lordship's Grace, I would rather be

hanged at once, and know what I'm about, than be given up to Sir Payan, to die no one can tell how."

"Fear not, fool," said Wolsey; "but tell the whole truth, and you shall be safe; ay, and rewarded. Conceal any thing, and you shall be hanged. Take him away, Secretary, and examine him carefully. Make him give an exact account of every thing he has seen in the house of Sir Payan Wileton, and after putting it in writing, swear him to it; and then—hark you," and he whispered something to the Secretary, adding, "Let him be there well used."

The man was now removed from the Cardinal's presence; and waiting till the messenger returned from Sir Payan's, Wolsey remained in deep thought, revolving in his keen and scrutinizing mind all the parts of the shrewd plot he had just heard developed, and thinking over the best means of punishing Sir Payan Wileton, in such a manner as to make his fall most bitter. While thus engaged, one of his secretaries entered, and, bowing low, stood silent, as if waiting for permission to speak.

"What is it?" said Wolsey; "Is it matter of consequence?"

The secretary bowed low again, and replied, "It is the herald's opinion, my Lord, upon the succession of the old Lord Orham of Barneton, the miser, who left the two chests of gold, as well—"

"I know, I know," said Wolsey. "How do they give it? I trust not to that base churl, William Orham, who struck my officer one day"

"Oh, no! your Grace," replied the secretary, "there are two nearer than he is. But they say the succession is quite clear. Charles Lord Orham, the great grandfather of the last, had three sons, from one of which descends William Orham; but the eldest son succeeding, had two sons and a daughter, all of whom married, and had issue; the eldest son, Thomas Lord Orham, him succeeded, who had only issue the last lord. The daughter had five sons, and the second son, Hugh Orham, had one only daughter, who married Arthur Bulmer, Earl of Wilmington, who died, leaving issue one only daughter, Mistress Katrine Bulmer, by courtesy the Lady Katrine Bulmer, whom your Grace may remember the Queen took very young, when it was found that Lord Wilmington's estates went in male descent. She is the undoubted heiress."

"Ha!" said Wolsey, "that changes much. Well, well! go see that it be clearly made out.—Now, what says Sir Payan

Wileton ?" he continued, turning to the messenger who had just returned.

"The house is empty, so please your Grace," replied the usher, "all but one old porter, who says that Sir Payan and his train set out for Chilham yesterday morning, after visiting your reverend Lordship. He affirms, moreover, that the Knight never got off his horse, but only gave orders that the priest should be sent down to Richmond with all speed, and then rode away himself for Kent."

"So!" said the Cardinal, his lip curling into a scornful sneer, "he finds his miscreant is caught, and thinks to deceive me with a tale that would not cloud the eyesight of an old woman. But let him stay; he shall lull himself into a fool's paradise, and then find himself fallen to nothing.—That will do." The usher fell back, and for a moment Wolsey, as was often his wont, continued muttering to himself—"The Lady Katrine—She was Darby's fool passion.—If it lasts he shall have her—'Tis better than the other—Besides, the other girl is away, and he must have gold to bear out his charges at this meeting at Ardres—So shall it be—Well, well—Send in whoever waits without," he added, speaking in a louder voice, and then applied himself to other business.

CHAPTER X.

"Three sides are sure inbarred with craggs and hills,
The rest is easy, scarce to rise espy'd,
But mighty bulwarks fence the plainer part,
So art helps nature, nature strengtheneth art."

FAIRFAX.

"Sir Knight, if Knight thou be,
Abandon this forestalled place as erst,
For fear of farther harm."

FAIRY QUEEN.

It may well be supposed, that under the circumstances in which we left Sir Osborne, his feelings could not be of the most tranquil or gratifying nature, when, after having heard all that passed upon deck, he distinguished the steps of the officer sent to arrest him, coming down the ladder. Longpole, for his part, looked very much as if he would have

liked to display cold iron upon the occasion; but the Knight made him a sign to forbear, and in a moment after, a gentleman splendidly dressed, as one high in military command, entered the cabin, followed by two or three armed attendants.

"Well, Sir," said the Knight, not very well distinguishing the stranger's features by the light in which he stood, "I suppose—" But he had not time to finish his sentence, for the officer grasped him heartily by the hand, exclaiming, "Now heaven bless us! Lord Darnley, my dear fellow in arms! how goes it with you these two years?"

"Excellent well, good Sir Henry Talbot," replied the Knight, frankly shaking the hand of his old companion. "But say, does your business lie with me?"

"No, no! good faith!" replied Sir Henry, "I came upon a very different errand. Since I was with Sir Thomas Peechy and yourself in Flanders, by my good Lord Surry's favour, I have obtained the command of one of the King's great ships, and as I lay last night off the mouth of the river, a pursuivant came down from London, with orders to stop every vessel that I saw, and search for a traitor who is endeavouring to make his escape to the Continent."

The Knight's cheek burned, and for a moment he hesitated whether to avow himself at once, and repel the opprobrious epithet thus attached to the name he had assumed, and under which, he felt full sure, he had never merited aught but honour. A moment's thought, however, showed him the madness of such a proceeding, and he replied, "I believe you will find no greater traitor here, Sir Henry, than myself."

The officer smiled. "If that be the case," replied he, "I may as well row back to the ship. Perhaps he may be in the other vessel that lies-to there, about a mile to windward. But come, Darnley, leave this filthy Dutch tub, come with me aboard, and after we have searched the other, I will land you in any port to which you are going, if it be between Middlebourg and Boulogne."

Although the Knight did not feel himself bound, even by the most chivalrous principles of honour, to betray his own secret to Sir Henry Talbot, yet he did not consider himself at liberty to take advantage of his offer, and thus make one of the King's own ships the means of conveying him away from pursuit. He therefore replied, that as he was going to Dunkirk in some haste, and the Dutchman was steering thither straight, he thought it would be best to proceed without changing his ship, though he felt extremely obliged by the offer.

The officer received his excuses in good part, and bidding him farewell, with many hearty wishes for his future prosperity, he mounted again to the deck, called his men together, abused the Dutchman vigorously for a few minutes, and getting into the boat, rowed away for his own vessel.

It is hardly necessary here to inform the reader, that the distinction which at present exists between the naval and military services, has not been known above a hundred and fifty years; and that, consequently, Sir Henry Talbot's having distinguished himself on land, so far from being a disqualification, was one of the highest recommendations to him in the sea-service! Vonderbrugius takes no notice of the circumstance, as probably the same practice existed in his time, although the latest instance that I can call to mind, is that of General Monk, who after having lived on land all his life, grew amphibious at the age of fifty.

However that may be, deceiving himself, as we have seen, Sir Henry Talbot left the young Knight to meditate over the conduct of Wolsey, who would indeed have committed an egregious piece of folly in sending to arrest him by the name of Sir Osborne Maurice alone, if he had known him to be Lord Darnley, as Sir Osborne thought. Attributing it, however, to one of those accidental omissions, which often disconcert the best-arranged proceedings, the Knight was congratulating himself on his good fortune, when Master Skippenhausen descended to offer his felicitations also, exclaiming, "My Cot! where did you hide yourself? Under that pile of hammocks, I'll warrant."

"No, you man of salt herrings! No, you cousin-german to a tub of butter!" exclaimed Longpole, whose indignation at the captain for having, by his delay of the night before, put them in such jeopardy, now broke forth irresistibly. "No, you dyke-begotten son of a swamp and a canal! If it had not been for you, we should never have run any risk, and don't flatter yourself that either you or your dirty hammocks either, had any hand in saving us."

"How did I make you run any risk, pray?" exclaimed the master. "You would have made me and my ship run a risk if you had been found in it; but I made you run none."

"Stockfish, you lie!" cried the Custrel. "Did you not lie in the mouth of the river all last night, when, if the blood in your veins had been any thing but muddy Dutch puddle, of the heaviest quality, you would have had us over to Dunkirk by this time. Deny it if you dare, Dutchman, and I will prove

it upon your body, till I leave you no more shape than one of your own cheeses."

The Dutchman bore the insolence of Longpole with all that calm magnanimity for which his nation is famed (says Vonderbrugius). However, Sir Osborne desired his attendant to be silent, and merely begging Master Skippenhausen to carry them to their destination as soon as possible, the matter ended.

It was night before they arrived at Dunkirk, and, without troubling the reader with all the details of their disembarkation, we shall merely beg him to look into the little hall of the Flemish inn, and see the Knight and Longpole seated at the same table, according to the custom of the day which we have before alluded to, while the host, standing behind the chair of Sir Osborne, answers the various questions which, from time to time are addressed to him; and that black-eyed, smooth-faced, dingy serving-boy, who one might swear was a truly begotten son of Hans Holbein, filches away the half-finished tankard of raspis from Longpole's elbow, and supplies its place with an empty one.

"And is Sir Albert of Koënigstein gone to Ratisbon too?" demanded Sir Osborne, pursuing the inquiries, which he was engaged in making concerning his old comrades, among whom a sad dispersion had taken place during his absence.

"Indeed I cannot tell, Sir Knight," replied the landlord; "but very likely he is with the Count of Shoenvelt, at Cassel."

"What does Shoenvelt at Cassel?" asked the Knight, thoughtfully.

"He is collecting adventurers, they say, Sir, under a commission from the Emperor," replied the host. "Some think, to go against the Moors, but most people judge, to protect the frontier against Robert de la Mark."

"But Koenigstien would not serve under him," said Sir Osborne, meditating over what he heard. "He is a better captain a thousand times, and a nobler spirit."

"Well, Sir," answered the landlord, "I tell you only what I heard. Somebody told me so, I am sure. Perhaps they command together.—Boy, give his worship another tankard; don't you see that is out?"

"Odds fish!" cried Longpole, "what, all gone? Your measures, mine host, are not like that certain knight's purse, that was no sooner empty than full again. It seems to me they are no sooner full than empty."

"At Cassel, did you say he is?" demanded Sir Osborne.

"Not exactly at Cassel, Sir Knight," replied the host, glad

to pass away from the subject of the tankard; "but you know Mount St. Hubert, about a league from Cassel. Your worship will find him there."

Sir Osborne made no reply; and, after a while, the host and his legion cleared the table of its encumbrances, and left the Knight and his follower to pursue their own thoughts undisturbed. We can hardly wonder that, though now free from all danger of pursuit, the heart of the young Knight was sad, and that his brow was clouded with many melancholy imaginings. It may be said, indeed, that he was not now in a worse situation than when he was formerly in Flanders, when he was happy and cheerful; but he *was* worse, inasmuch as he had since entertained hopes and expectations which were now broken and passed away,—inasmuch as he had known scenes, and tasted joys, that he had now lost, and which might never be his again. Every enjoyment of the human heart is like a tree planted deeply in the soil, which when rooted out, leaves not the earth as it was before, but tears it up and scatters it abroad, and makes a yearning void difficult to be filled again.

However, there was one thing which he had gained, an object in life. Formerly his natural disposition, the chivalrous spirit of the age, the ardour of high health, and the strong impulsive bias given by early associations, had impelled him onward, on the only path of renown then open to a daring spirit. But now he has a still more inspiring motive, a more individual incitement, to press forward to the goal of fame. Constance de Grey was ever present to his thoughts, furnished the spring of all his actions, and directed his every endeavour. Renown in arms was his already; but fortune, station, he felt he must gain at the sword's point, and he only sought a good cause wherein to draw it.

The report that Albert of Koenigstien, his old friend and companion in arms, had joined the adventurers which the Count of Shoenvelt was collecting at Cassel, led him to imagine, that the cause in which they would be engaged was one that he could himself embrace with honour; although Shoenvelt's name had not been hitherto very famous for the better qualities of chivalry. He doubted not, also, that from the high station which he himself had filled in the armies of Burgundy, he should easily obtain that rank and command which he was entitled to expect, among the troops thus assembled.

The history of the various bands of adventurers of that day offers us some of the most curious and interesting parti-

culars of a curious and interesting age. These companies, totally distinct from the regular armies of the time, (if regular armies they might be called,) were generally levied by some enterprising feudal lord; and commencing, most frequently, among his own vassals, afterward swelled out into very formidable bodies by a junction with other bands, and by the continual accession of brave and veteran soldiers, cast upon the world by the sovereigns they had served, when peace rendered their swords no longer necessary. Of course, the numbers in these companies varied very much according to circumstances, as well as their regulations and deportment. Sometimes they consisted of thousands, sometimes of simple tens. Sometimes, with the strictest discipline and the most unshrinking valour, they entered into the service of kings, and decided the fate of empires: sometimes they were little better than roving bands of robbers, that lived by rapine, and hardly acknowledged law. Most frequently, however, in the age of which we treat, they volunteered their support to the armies of their own sovereign, or his allies, and often proved more active than the body they came to aid.

However, if Theseus had played at pitch and toss with Ariadne's clue, he would never have slain the Minotaur, and therefore me must go on with the thread of our own story, notwithstanding a strong inclination to go wool-gathering after the adventurers. Nevertheless, thus much we will say. If our readers wish a treat—let them read the delightful old Memoires of Fleuranges, "*L'Aventurier*," as he calls himself, which for simplicity, and, if I may use the term, *bonhommie* of style, for curious incident and romantic adventure, is far superior to any romance that ever was written. Many curious particulars also, concerning the appearance and conduct of the adventurers, may be found in the letters of Clement Morat to Marguerite de Valois.

But to proceed:—the next morning, by day-break, Sir Osborne and his companion were once more on horseback, and on their way to Mount Cassel; the Knight having determined to learn, in the first place, the views of Shoenvelt, and to examine the real state of his troops, before he offered himself as a companion in the adventure. In case he found their object such as he could not himself seek, his mind was hardly made up, whether to offer his services to the Emperor, or to Francis, King of France. His old habits, indeed, tended to make him prefer the Imperial army; but from all he had heard of the new Chief of the German confederacy, there was a

sort of cold-blooded, calculating policy in his every action, that little accorded with the warm and chivalrous feelings of the young Knight: while, at the same time, there was in the whole conduct of Francis, a noble, candid, generosity of heart, a wild enthusiastic spirit of daring and adventure, that wonderfully attracted Sir Osborne towards him.

Journeying on with a quick pace, Mount Cassel soon rose to the traveller's sight, starting out of the vast plains in which it stands, like some high spirit towering above the flat multitude.

Sweeping round its base, the Knight turned his horse towards a lesser hill, at about two miles distance, the top of which was, in that day, crowned by the Castle of Shoenvelt. From the plain below, as the eye wandered up the side of the mountain, amid the wood and broom that covered the rock in large masses, might be seen peeping forth, wall, and bastion, and outwork, while higher up, in zig-zag lines upon the clear back-ground of the sky, appeared the towers and battlements of the castle; with the tall donjon rising above them all, and the banner of Shoenvelt, bearing sable a saltier gules, floating in the sunshine.

A broad, fair road offered itself for the travellers' horses, winding along a narrow rocky ridge, which was the only part, that slowly descending, joined the hill gradually to the plain. All the rest was steep and precipitous, and too well guarded by nature to be liable to attack; while overhanging this sole approach, might be seen, on every side, many a frowning defence, well prepared against any hostile footstep. Gradually as the road wound upwards, it grew narrower and more narrow, confined between two high banks, commanded by the towers of the castle, while the road itself was completely raked by the guns of the barbican.

Sir Osborne remarked it all with a soldier's eye, looking on it as a mechanist does on some fine piece of art, and observing the purpose of every different part. Pressing on, however, he soon arrived at the gate, and demanded if Sir Albert of Koenigstien was in the castle.

Though in time of peace, no gate was opened, and the sole response of the soldier to whom he spoke, was, "Who are you?" uttered through the grille of the barbican. The Knight gave his name, and the man retired without making any farther answer.

"This looks like precaution, Longpole," said the Knight. "Methinks they would run no great danger in letting two men pass the gate, though they may be armed at all points."

"I suppose the custom of this castle, is like the custom of a rat-hole," replied Longpole, "to let but one in at a time. But I hope you won't stay here, my lord. I have an invincible hatred at being built up. As much of the camp and fair field as you like, but Lord deliver me from stone and mortar. Besides, this place smacks marvellously of a den of free companions. Look at that fellow with the pike on his shoulder; neither his morion nor his corslet, have known sand and the rubbing-stick since his great ancestor was drowned with Pharaoh; and 'twas then his harness got so rusty, depend on it."

"In a Red Sea, I am afraid," said Sir Osborne. "But here comes the janitor."

As he spoke, the guardian of the gate approached, with a bunch of keys, and soon gave the Knight the means of entrance. Sir Osborne, however, still held his bridle in, and demanded once more, if Sir Albert of Koenigstien was in the castle.

"I cannot tell you, Sir," replied the soldier. "I know not the title of all the knights here. All I can say is, that I gave your name and errand to my lord, who sits at a table in the great hall, and that he greets you heartily, and invites you in."

At this moment a group of gentlemen appeared, coming through the gate of the inner ballium, and Sir Osborne, not doubting that they had been sent by the Count to conduct him to the hall, saw that he could not now avoid entering, whether the officer he sought was there or not. Riding through the gate, then, he dismounted, and giving his horse to Longpole, met the party he had seen advancing, the principal of whom, with much reverence and courtesy, prayed the Sire de Darnley, on the part of Count Shoenvelt, to enter and quaff a cup of wine with him. Sir Osborne expressed his willingness to do so, in the same strain, and then repeated his inquiry for his friend.

"We are unhappy in not having his company," replied the gentleman; "but I believe the Count expects him here in a few days."

He was a young man who spoke, and there was a sort of flush came over his cheek, as he announced the probable coming of Koenigstien, which induced Sir Osborne to imagine that his report was not very correct; and fixing his eye upon him, he merely said, "Does he?" with a slight degree of emphasis.

"Yes, Sir, he does!" cried the youth, colouring still more highly. "Do you mean to say he does not?"

"Not in the least," said Sir Osborne; "as you may see by my seeking him here; and I am sure, that sogallant a squire as yourself, would never swerve from truth."

The young man bent down his eyes, and began playing with his sword-knot, while Sir Osborne now perfectly convinced that the whole tale was a falsehood, followed on in silence, prepared to act according to this opinion. In a few minutes they passed through the portal of the keep, and entered at once into the great hall, up the midst of which was placed a long table, surrounded by the chief of Shoenvelt's adventurers, with various pages and varlets, serving the meats and pouring out the wine. Round upon the walls hung the arms of the various guests, cumbering every hook or peg that could be found; and where these had been scanty, they were cast upon the ground behind the owner's seats, together with saddles and bards, and other horse caparisons; while in the corner leaned several score of lances, mingled among which were one or two knightly pennons, and many a sheaf of arrows, jostled by the upstart weapons, destined in the end to banish them from the stage, such as hackbuts, hand-guns, and other new invented fire-arms.

At the farther end of the table, digging deeply with his dagger in a chine of wild boar pork, which had been just placed before him, sat the Count of Shoenvelt himself, tall, strong-limbed, and grisly, with a long, drooping, hooked nose, depressed at the point, as if some one had set their thumb on it, at the same time squeezing it down, and rather twisting it on one side. This implement was flanked, if one may use the term, by a pair of small keen hawk's eyes, which expressed more active cunning than vigorous thought; while a couple of immense ears, sticking out on each side of his head, and worn into various irregular calosities by the pressure of his helmet, gave a singular and brute-like appearance to his whole visage, not easy to be described. He was dressed in a hacqueton, or close jacket of buff leather, laced with gold, on which might be seen, especially towards the arms, sundry daubs aud stains, to the number of which he had just added another, by dashing all the gravy over his sleeve, in his furious hacking of the large and stubborn piece of meat before him. This accident had called into his face not the most angelic expression, and as he sat he would have made a good picture of an inferior sort of devil; the whole effect being heightened by a strong ray of light passing through a purple pane of the stained-glass

window, and falling with a ghastly lustre upon his dark ferocious countenance.

The moment, however, that he perceived Sir Osborne, his brow was smoothed, and rising from his seat, he advanced towards him with great expressions of joy. "My dear Lord of Darnley," cried he, taking him in his arms and pressing him to his bosom with a hug, that the Knight would willingly have dispensed with; "welcome! a thousand times welcome to St. Hubert's Castle! Whether you come to stay with us as a companion, or whether you are but a passing guest, your visit is an honour and a delight to all within these walls. Knights and gentlemen," continued he, "pledge me all a cup to the health of the Sire de Darnley."

To the party by whom he was surrounded, such a proposal was what nobody felt at all inclined to reject, and consequently there was instantly a vast rattling of cups and tankards, and no one complained that their bowl was too full. All pledged Lord Darnley; and he could not refuse to do them justice in a cup of wine. After which, taking the seat that Shoenvelt assigned by his side, the Knight gazed over the various grim and war-worn faces which were gathered round the table, some of which he knew merely by sight, and some, who having exchanged a word or two with him in the various reciprocations of military service, now looked as if they claimed some mark of recognition. Sir Osborne was not the man to reject such appeal, and he gave the expected bow to each, though among them all, he saw no one who had greatly distinguished himself for those high feelings and generous virtues that ever marked the true Knight.

Many were the questions that were asked him; many the conjectures that were propounded to him for confirmation, respecting the designs of France and England and of Germany; and it was some time before he could cut them short, by informing his interrogators that he had been for the last three months, in his own country, so deeply occupied by his private affairs, that he had given no attention to the passing politics of the day. The whole party seemed greatly disappointed, entertaining apparently a much more violent thirst for news than even that which is commonly to be met with in all small communities, cut off from general information, and unoccupied by greater or better subjects of contemplation.

As soon as the meal, which was drawing towards its end when Sir Osborne entered, was completely concluded, Shoenvelt rose, and begged to entertain him for a few minutes in

private, which being agreed to, he led him forth into a small space enclosed with walls, wherein the provident Chatelain had contrived to assemble against the hour of need, a very sufficient store of cabbages, turnips, carrots, and other *canaille* of the vegetable kingdom which might be very serviceable in case of siege. Here walking up and down a long path that bordered the beds, with Sir Osborne on his right, and a knight named Wilsten (whom he had invited to the conference) on his left, Shoenvelt addressed Lord Darnley somewhat to the following effect, generally while he did so fixing his eyes upon vacancy, as a man does who recites awkwardly a set speech, but still from time to time giving a quick sharp glance towards the Knight's countenance, to see the impression he produced.

"Valiant and worthy Knight,—a-hem! a-hem!" said Shoenvelt. "Every one, whether in Germany or France, England or Spain, or even here in our poor Dutchy of Burgundy,—a-hem! a-hem!—Every one, I say, has heard of your valorous feats and courageous deeds of arms; wherefore it cannot be matter of astonishment to you, that wherever there is a captain, who having gathered together a few hardy troops —a-hem! a-hem!—is desirous of signalizing himself in the service of his country—a-hem!—wherever there is such a one, I say, you cannot be surprised that he wishes to gain you to his aid."—Here Shoenvelt gave a glance to Wilsten to see if he approved his proemium; after which he again proceeded.—"Now you must know, worthy Knight, that I have here in my poor castle, which is a strong one, as you may perceive,—a-hem,—no less than five hundred as good spearmen as ever crossed a horse, which I have gathered together for no mean purpose.—A purpose," he continued, mysteriously, "which, if effected, will not only enrich all persons who contribute their aid thereto, but will gain them eternal thanks of our good and noble Emperor,—a-hem! a-hem!—I could say more—a-hem!"

"Tonder, man! tell him all," cried Wilsten, who had served with Sir Osborne, and had the reputation of being a brave and gallant knight, though somewhat addicted to plunder; "or let me tell him, for your bedevilled hems take more time than it would to storm a fort.—This is the case, Sir Knight. A great meeting is to take place between the King of France and the King of England at the border, and all the nobility of France are in motion through Picardy, and the frontier provinces, covered with more gold than they ever had in their lives before. Even Francis himself, like a mad fool, is running from castle

to castle, along the frontier, sometimes with not more than half a dozen followers.—Now, then, fancy what a rich picking may be had amid these gay French gallants; and if Francis himself were to fall into our hands, we might command half a kingdom for his ransom—Ah?"

"But I thought that the two countries were at peace," said the Knight, with a coldness of manner sufficiently marked, as he thought, to prevent any farther communication of the kind.

Wilsten, however, was not to be stopped, and replied, "Ay, a sort of peace—A peace that is no peace on the frontiers. Don't let that frighten you—We can prove that they were the first aggressors! Why, did not they, less than ten days ago, attack the garrison of St. Omer's, and kill three men in trying to force the gate? Have they not ravaged half Hainault? But, however, as I said, be not startled at that; Shoenvelt saw the Emperor about two months ago, who gave him to understand that we could not do him a better service than either to take Francis alive, or give him a stroke with a lance. And fear not that our plans are well laid; we have already two hundred men scattered over the frontier; every forest, every village, has its ten or twelve, ready to join at a moment's notice, when we sound to the standard: two hundred more follow to-night, and Shoenvelt and I to-morrow, in small parties, so as not to be suspected. Already we have taken a rich burgher of Beauvais, with velvets and cloths of gold, worth a hundred thousand florins. But that is nothing; the King is our great object, and him we shall have, without some cursed accident prevents it: for we do not hunt him by report only, we have our gaze-hound upon him, who never loses sight. What think you of that, Sir Knight? Count William of Firstenberg, Shoenvelt's cousin, who is constantly with Francis, ay, and well beloved of him, is our sworn companion, and gives us notice of all his doings. What think you of that, Sir Knight—Ha?"

"I think him a most infernal villain!" cried Sir Osborne, his indignation breaking forth in spite of his better judgment. "By heaven, before I would colleague with such a traitor, I'd have my hand struck off."

"Ha!" cried Shoenvelt, who had marked the Knight's coldness all along, and now burst into fury. "A traitor! Sir Knight, you lie—Ho! shut the gates there. By heaven, he will betray us, Wilsten! call Marquard's guard—down with him to a dungeon;" and laying his hand upon his sword, he

prepared to stop the Knight, who now strode rapidly towards the gate.

"Nay, nay," cried Wilsten, holding his companion's arm. "Remember, Shoenvelt, 'tis your own hold. He must not be hurt here—nay, by my faith he shall not;—we will find a more fitting place—hold, I say."

While Shoenvelt, still furious, strove to free himself from Wilsten, Sir Osborne passed the gate of the garden, and entered the space of the outer ballium, where Longpole had pertinaciously remained with the two horses, as close to the barbican, whose gate had been left open when they entered, as possible, seeming to have had a sort of presentiment that it might be necessary to secure possession of the bridge.

The moment the Knight appeared without any conductors, the shrewd Custrel conceived at once that something had gone wrong, sprang upon his own horse, gave a glance round the court to see that his retreat could not be cut off, and perceiving that almost all the soldiers were near the inner wall, he led forward his Lord's charger to meet him.

Sir Osborne had his foot in the stirrup, when Shoenvelt, now broken away from Wilsten, rushed forth from the garden, vociferating to his men to shut the gate, and to raise the drawbridge, but in a moment the Knight was in the saddle; and spurring on, with one buffet of his hand in passing, he felled a soldier, who had started forward to drop the cullis, and darted over the bridge.

"On to the other gate, Longpole," cried he. "Quick. Make sure of it;" and turning his own horse, he faced Shoenvelt, who now seeing him gone beyond his power, stood foaming under the arch.—"Count of Shoenvelt!" cried he, drawing off his glove, "thou art a liar, a traitor, and a villain, which, when you will, I will prove upon your body. There lies my gage;" and casting down his gauntlet, he galloped after Longpole, who stood with his sword drawn in a small outer gate, which had been thrown forward even beyond the barbican.

"Up, archers up," cried Shoenvelt, storming with passion; "up, lazy villains—a hundred crowns to him who sends me an arrow through his heart. Draw! draw, slaves! Draw! I say."

In a moment an arrow stuck in Sir Osborne's surcoat, and another lighted on his casque, but, luckily, as we have seen, the more easily to carry his harness, or armour, he rode completely armed, and the missiles from the castle fell in vain.

However, lest his horse should suffer, which not being suffi-

ciently covered by its bard to insure it from a chance arrow, might have been disabled at the very moment he needed it most, the Knight spurred on as fast as possible, and having joined Longpole, descended the narrow way by which they had mounted.

Still for some way the arrows continued to fall about them, though with less assured aim and exhausted force; so that the only danger that remained, might be apprehended, either from the guns of the castle being fired upon them, or from Shoenvelt sending out a body of spearmen in their pursuit. Neither of these, however, took place; the inhabitants of the country round, and the commander of Cassel being too jealous and suspicious of Shoenvelt already, for him to do any thing which might more particularly attract their attention; and to this cause, and this cause only, was Sir Osborne indebted for his unpursued escape.

CHAPTER XI.

How blest am I by such a man led,
Under whose wise and careful guardship
I now despise fatigue and hardship.

As soon as they were out of reach of immediate annoyance, the Knight reined in his horse, and turned to see if Shoenvelt showed any symptoms of an inclination to follow. But all was now quiet: the gates shut, the drawbridge raised, and not even an archer to be seen upon the walls. Sir Osborne's eye, however, ran over tower, and bartizan, and wall, and battlement, with so keen and searching a glance, that if any watched him in his progress, it must have been from the darkest loophole in the castle, to escape the notice of his marking eye.

Satisfied at length with his scrutiny, he again pursued his journey down the steep descent into the vast plain of Flanders, and turned his horse towards Mount Cassel, giving Longpole an account, as he went, of the honourable plans and purposes of the good Count of Shoenvelt.

"Odd's life, my Lord," said Longpole, "let us go into that part of the world too. If we could but get a good stout fellow or two to our back, we might disconcert them."

"I fear they are too many for us," replied the Knight, "though it seems that Shoenvelt, avaricious of all he can get, and afraid that aught should slip through his hands, has divided his men into tens and twelves, so that a few spears well led, might do a great deal of harm among them. At all events, Longpole, we will buy a couple of lances at Cassel, for we may yet chance to meet with some of Shoenvelt's followers on our road."

Conversing over their future proceedings, they now mounted the steep ascent of Mount Cassel, and approached the gate of the town, the iron grate of which, to their surprise, was slowly pushed back in their faces as they rode up. "Ho! soldier, why do you shut the gate?" cried Sir Osborne, "don't you see, we are coming in?"

"No, you are not," replied the other, who was a stiff old Hainaulter, looking as rigid and untractable as the iron jack that covered his shoulders; "none of Shoenvelt's plunderers come in here."

"But we are neither friends, nor plunderers of Shoenvelt's," said the Knight; "we are his enemies, and have just made our escape from St. Hubert's."

"Ah! a fine tale! a fine tale!" replied the soldier, through the barred gate, which he continued slowly and imperturbably to fasten against them. "We saw you come down the hill, but you don't step in here to-night—so you had better ride away, before the captain sends down to make you. We all know that you can lie as well as rob."

"By my life if I were in, I'd split your morion for you," said the Knight, enraged at the cool nonchalance of the Hainaulter.

"Doubtless," replied he, in the same sort of indifferent snuffling tone, "doubtless—you look like it—and that's one reason why I shall keep you out."

Sir Osborne wasted no more words on the immoveable old pikeman, but angrily turning his horse, began again to descend the hill. A little way down the steep, there was even then, as now, a small hamlet serving as a sort of suburb to the town above, and towards this the Knight took his way, pausing to gaze, every now and then, on the vast interminable plain that lay stretched at his feet, spread over which, he could see a thousand cities and villages, all filled with their own little interests and feelings, wherein he had no part or sympathy, and a thousand roads leading away to them, in every direction without any one to guide his choice, or to tell him on which he might expect prosperity or disaster.

"To Aire," said he, after he had thought for some time. "We will go to Aire; I hear that the Count de Ligny, whom I fought at Issen, is there, and the Chevalier Bayard, and many other gallant Knights and gentlemen, who, perhaps may welcome me among them. Is not that the smoke of a forge, Longpole? Perhaps we may find an armourer? Let us see."

As the Knight had imagined, so it proved, and on their demanding two strong lances, the armourer soon brought them forward a bundle of stiff ash staves, bidding them choose. After some examination to ascertain the soundness of the wood, their choice was made, and the Fleming proceeded to adjust to the smaller end of each, two hand-breadths of pointed iron, which being fastened and clenched, the Knight and his follower paid the charge, and taking possession of their new weapons, rode away, directing their course towards Hazebrouck, in their way to Aire.

Their progress now became necessarily slow; for though both horses were powerful in limb and joint, and trained to carry great burdens and endure much fatigue, yet the weight of a heavy iron bard, together with that of a tall strong man armed at all points, was such that in a long journey it necessarily made itself felt. Evidently perceiving by the langour of his motions, that the charger which bore him was becoming greatly wearied, Sir Osborne ceased to urge him, and proposed to stop for the evening at the very first village that could boast of an inn. Nevertheless, it was some time before they met with such a one, most of the hamlets on the road being too poor and insignificant to require or possess any thing of the kind. At length, however, a small neat house with a verdant holy-bush over the door, invited their steps, and entering, Sir Osborne was saluted heartily by the civil host, who with brandished knife, and snowy bib, was busily engaged in cooking various savoury messes for any guest that Providence might send him. Some specimens of his handiwork were placed before the Knight and Longpole, as soon as their horses had been taken care of; and an excellent bottle of old wine, together with some fatigue, induced them to linger a little at the table.

The lattice, which was open, looked out across the road to the little village green, where was to be seen many a schoolboy playing in the fine May evening, and mocking in his childish sports, the sadder doings of the grown-up children of the day. Here, horsed upon their fellows' backs, were two that acted the part of knights, tilting at each other with broomsticks; and there, marshalled in fair order by a youthful

captain, marched a body of young lansquenets, advancing and retreating, wheeling and charging, with no small precision.

Sir Osborne watched them for a while, in somewhat of a moralizing mood, till his musing was disturbed by the trotting of a horse past the window, and in a moment after he heard the good-humoured voice of the host addressing the person who arrived.

"Ah! master Frederick," he said, "what, back again so soon! I told you you would soon be tired of soldiering."

"Nay, nay, Regnault," answered a voice that Sir Osborne thought he had heard before; "I am not tired of soldiering, and never shall be, but I am tired of consorting with a horde of plunderers, for such is Shoenvelt, and such are all his followers. But while I lead my horse to the stable, get me something to eat, good Regnault, for I do not want to go back to the hall till I have dented my sword at least."

"What, are you going to it again?" cried the host; "stay at home, Master Frederick! Stay at home! Take care of the house your father has left you. If you are not so rich as the Baron, you have enough, and that is better than riches, if one knew it."

"My father was a soldier," answered the young man, "and distinguished himself; and so will I too, before I sit down in peace."

Here the conversation ceased, and the host, entering the room in which sat the Knight and follower, began to lay out one of the small tables with which it was furnished. "That is as good a youth," said he, addressing Sir Osborne, while he proceeded with his preparations:—"that is as good a youth as ever [illegible]ed, if he had not taken this fit of soldiering. His father was a younger brother of old Count Altaman, and after many years' service, came to our village, and bought a piece of ground, where he built a house—your worship may see it from here, over the side of the hill, with the wood behind it.—He has been dead now a year, and his wife near three; and so Master Frederick there must needs go soldiering. They say it is all love for the Baron's daughter. But here he comes."

As he spoke, the young man entered the room, presenting to Sir Osborne, as he had expected, the face of the youth who had been sent by Shoenvelt to welcome him on his arrival at the castle. An ingenuous blush overspread the young Hainaulter's countenance, when he saw Sir Osborne, and taking his seat at the table prepared for him, he turned away his head, and began his meal in silence.

"Had not you better take off your corslet, Master Frederick?" demanded the host.

"No, no, Regnault," replied the youth; "I do not know that I shall stay here all night. Never mind! give me some wine, and leave me."

Thus repulsed, the innkeeper withdrew; and Sir Osborne continued to watch the young soldier, who, whether it was a feeling of shame at meeting the Knight, and degradation at having been made, even in a degree, a party to Shoenvelt's attempt to deceive him, or whether it was bitterness of spirit at returning to his native place unsuccessful: seemed to have his heart quite full; and it appeared to be with pain that he ate the food which was placed before him.

Sir Osborne could feel for disappointed hopes, and after regarding him for a moment or two in silence, he crossed the room and laid his hand upon his shoulder.

The young man turned round, with a flushed cheek, hardly knowing whether by anger at the familiarity to vent the vexed feelings of his heart, or to take it in good part, and strive to win the esteem of a man whom he had been taught to admire.

But there was a frankness in the Knight's manner, and a noble kindness of intent in his look, that soon removed all doubt: "So, young gentleman," said he, "you have left Count Shoenvelt's company. I thought you were not made to stay long among them; but say, was it with his will?"

"I stayed not to ask, my Lord," replied the young man; "I was bound to Shoenvelt in no way, and the moment the gates were opened after you were gone, I rode out, and came away."

Sir Osborne shook his head. "When a soldier engages with a commander," said he, "his own will and pleasure must not be the term of his service. But of all things, he ought not to quit his leader's banner, without giving notice that he intends to do so."

"But, thank God!" cried the young Hainaulter, "I had not yet taken service with Shoenvelt. He wanted to swear me to it, as he does the rest; but I would not do so, till I saw more of him and of his plans—and so I told him."

"That makes the matter very different," replied the Knight, with a smile, "I am heartily glad to hear it, for I dare pronounce him a traitorous ruffian and no true Knight. But one more question, young Sir, if I urge not your patience. How came you to seek Shoenvelt at first, who never bore a high renown, but as a marauder?"

The youth hesitated. "It matters not, Sir Knight," replied he, after a moment's pause, "to you or any one, what reasons

I might have to seek renown as speedily as possible, and why the long tedious road to knighthood and to fame, first as page, and then as squire, and then as man-at-arms, was such as I could not bear; but so it was; and as Shoenvelt gave out that he had high commissions from the Emperor, and was to do great deeds, I hoped that with him I might find speedy means of signalizing myself. After being two days in the castle, I discovered that his whole design was plunder, which was not the way to fame; and this morning he made me deliver you a message, which I knew to be a falsehood, which was not the road to honour; so I determined to leave him; and as the spearmen are always dropping out of the castle by five or six at a time, to go down to the frontier, I soon found the means of getting away."

"Yours is an error, my good youth," said Sir Osborne, "which I am afraid we are all wont to entertain in the first heat of our early days; but we soon find that the road to fame is hard and difficult of access, and that it requires time, and perseverance, and labour, and strength, even to make a small progress therein. Even those who, with a gay imagination, fancy they have made themselves wings to fly up to the top, soon, like the Cretan of old, sear their pinions in the sun, or drop into the sea of oblivion. However, are you willing to follow a poor Knight, who, though he cannot promise either fame or riches, will lead you, at least, in the path of honour?"

The enthusiastic youth caught the Knight's hand, and kissed it in inexpressible delight. "What, follow you!" cried he, "follow the Lord Darnley! the Knight of Burgundy! whose single arm maintained the bridge at Bovines against the bravest of the Duke of Alençon's horse! Ay, that I will, follow him through the world.—Do you hear that, Regnault," he cried to the innkeeper, who now entered, "do you hear that? Instead of the base Shoenvelt, I am going to follow the noble Lord of Darnley, who was armed a Knight by the Emperor himself."

The honest innkeeper congratulated Master Frederick heartily upon the exchange; for the Knight was now in that part of the country where his name, if not his person, was well known; and in that age, the fame of gallant actions, and of noble bearing, spread rapidly through all ranks, and gained the meed of applause from men, whom we might suppose little capable of appreciating it.

All preliminaries were speedily arranged, and the next morning, Sir Osborne set out by dawn for the small town of

Hazebrouck, which lay at about two leagues' distance, where he took care to furnish his new follower with a lance, and several pieces of defensive armour that were wanting to his equipment; and then, to ascertain what reliance might be placed on his support in case of emergency, he excited him to practise various military exercises with himself, as they rode along towards Aire. To his no small surprise and pleasure, he found that the young Hainaulter, though somewhat rash and hasty, was far more skilful in the use of his weapons, and the management of his horse, than he could have conceived; and with such an addition to his party, he no longer scrupled to cast himself in the way of some of Shoenvelt's bodies of marauders, to keep his hand in, as Longpole quaintly expressed it, when he heard his lord's determination.

"Come, Frederick," said the Knight, "I will not go on to Aire, as I had determined; but, in order to gratify your wish for renown, we will lay about on the frontier, like true errant knights of old, at any village or other place where we may find shelter; and if we meet with Shoenvelt, or any of his, mind you do honour to your arms. We shall always have the odds of eight or nine against us."

"No, no, Sir Knight!" cried the young soldier, "do not believe that. It is one of his falsehoods; there are not above ten in any of the bands, and most of them are five or six.—I know where most of them lie."

"Hush, hush!" cried Sir Osborne, raising his finger, "you must tell me nothing, that if you should chance to break a lance with him, your hand may not tremble at thinking you have betrayed his counsel.—Nay, do not blush, Frederick. A man that aspires to chivalry must guide himself by stricter rules than other men. It was for this I spoke. Here is the fair river Lys, if I remember right?"

"It is so, Sir Knight," replied the other; "there is a bridge about a mile lower down."

"What, for a brook like this?" cried Sir Osborne, spurring his horse in. "Oh, no, we will ford it. Follow."

The young Hainaulter's horse did not like the plunge, and shied away from the brink. "Spur him in, spur him in!" cried Longpole. "If our Lord reaches the other bank first, he will never forgive us. He swims like an otter himself, and fancies that his squires ought to be water-rats by their birthright."

"Down with the left rein!" cried the Knight, turning as his horse swam, and seeing the situation of his young follower.

"Give him the spur, and bring him to a demivolte, and he must in."

As the Knight said, at the second movement of the demivolte, the horse's feet were brought on the very brink of the river, and a slight touch of the mullet made him plunge over; so that, though somewhat embarrassed with his lance in the water, Frederick soon reached the other bank in safety.

One of the beautiful Flemish meadows, which still in many parts skirt the banks of the Lys, presented itself on the other side; and beyond that, a forest that has long since known the rude touch of the heavy axe, which, like some fell enchanter's wand, has made so many of the loveliest woods in Europe disappear, without leaving a trace behind. The one we speak of was then in its full glory, sweeping along with a rich undulating outline by the side of the soft green plain that bordered the river, sometimes advancing close to the very brink, as if the giant trees of which it was composed sought to contemplate their grandeur in the watery mirror, sometimes falling far away, and leaving a wide open space between itself and the stream, covered with thick short grass, and strewed with the thousand flowers wherewith Nature's liberal hand has fondly decorated her favourite spring. Every here and there, too, the wood itself would break away, discovering a long glade penetrating into the deepest recesses of its bosom, filled with the rich mellow forest light, that, streaming between every aperture, checkered the green mossy path below, and showed a long perspective of vivid light and shade as far as the eye could reach.

It was up one of these that Sir Osborne took his way, willing to try the mettle of his new follower, and to initiate him into the trade of war, by a few of its first hardships and dangers, doubting not, that Shoenvelt had taken advantage of that forest, situated as it was, between Lillers and Aire, to post at least one party of his men therein. From what the youth had let drop, as well as from what he had himself observed, the Knight was led to believe that the adventurer had greatly magnified the number of his forces; and he also concluded that, to avoid suspicion, he had divided his men into very small troops, except on such points as he expected the King of France himself to pass; and even then Sir Osborne did not doubt that thirty men would be the extent of any one body. Francis's habit of riding almost unattended, with the fearless confidence natural to his character, being but too well known on the frontier.

To meet with Shoenvelt himself, and, if possible, to disappoint his schemes for plunder, was now the Knight's castle in the air; and though the numbers of his own party were so scanty, he felt the sort of confident assurance in his own courage, his own strength, and his own skill, which is ever worth a host in moments of danger. Longpole, he was sure also, would be no inefficient aid; and though the young Hainaulter might not be their equal in experience or skill, Sir Osborne did not fear that, in time of need, his enthusiastic courage and desire to distinguish himself, would make him more than a match for one of Shoenvelt's company.

Under these circumstances, the Knight would never have hesitated to attack a body of double, or perhaps treble his own number; and yet he resolved to proceed cautiously; endeavouring in the first place to inform himself of the situation of Shoenvelt's various bands, and to ascertain which he was likely to join himself.

Wilsten having let drop that he himself and the Count, as the two leaders, were to set out the next morning, Sir Osborne saw that no time was to be lost, in reconnoitring the ground, to ascertain the real force of the adventurers. He resolved, therefore, to take every means to learn their strength; and if he found them more formidable in numbers than he imagined, to risk nothing with so few, but to provide for the King's safety, by giving notice to the garrison of Aire, that the monarch was menaced by danger; and then to aid them with his own hand to rid the frontier of such dangerous visiters, though he felt a great degree of reluctance to share with any one an enterprise full of honourable danger. At all events, it was necessary to ascertain where Francis was, for Shoenvelt might have been deceived, or the King might already have quitted the frontier, or he might be accompanied by sufficient escort to place his person in security; or, in short, a thousand circumstances might have happened, which would render the enterprise of the adventurers abortive, and his own interference unnecessary, if not impertinent.

Revolving on all these considerations in his mind, sometimes proceeding in silence, sometimes calling upon his companions for their opinion, Sir Osborne took his way up one of the deep glades of the forest, still keeping a watchful ear to every sound that stirred in the wood, so that not a note of the thrush or blackbird, nor the screaming of a jay, or the rustle of a rabbit, escaped him; and yet nothing met his ear which might denote that there were other beings hid beneath those green boughs

besides themselves, and the savage tenants of the place, the stag, the wild boar, and the wolf.

The deep ruts, formed by some heavy woodcart in the soft mossy carpet of the glade, told that the route they were pursuing was one which most probably communicated with some village, or some other road of greater thoroughfare; and after following it for about a mile, they perceived that, now joined to another exactly similar to itself, it wound away to the left, leaving nothing but a small bridleway before them, which Sir Osborne judged, must lead to some spot where the wood had been cleared.

As their horses were now rather fatigued, and the full sun shining upon the forest rendered its airless paths very oppressive, the Knight chose the little path before him, hoping it would lead to some more open space, where they might repose for a while, and at the same time keep a watch upon the roads they had just quitted. His expectations were not deceitful; for after having proceeded about two hundred yards, they came to a little grassy mound, in the wood, which in former times might have monumented the field of some Gallic or Roman victory, piled up above the bones of the mighty dead. Even now, though the forest had grown round, and girt it in on every side, the trees themselves seemed to hold it in reverence, leaving it, and even some space round it, free from their grasping roots, except indeed where a group of idle hawthorns had gathered impudently on its very summit, flaunting their light blossoms to the sun, and spreading their perfume on the wind.

It was the very spot suited to Sir Osborne's purpose; and dismounting, the three travellers leaned their lances against the trees; and letting their horses pick a meal from off the forest grass, prepared to repose themselves under the shadow of the thorns. Previous to casting himself down upon the bank, however, the Knight took care to examine the wood around them, and seeing a sort of yellow light shining between the trees beyond, he pursued his way along what seemed a continuation of the little path which had brought them thither. Proceeding in a slanting direction, apparently to avoid the bolls of some enormous beeches, it did not go on for above ten or twelve yards, and then opened out upon a high road, cut through the very wildest part of the forest, at a spot where an old stone cross and fountain of clear water, commemorated the philanthropy of some one long dead, and offered the best of Nature's gifts to the lip of the weary traveller. Sir Os-

borne profited by the occasion, and communicated his discovery to his companions, who took advantage of it to satisfy their thirst also. They then lay down in the shade, and, after some brief conversation, the heat of the day so overpowered the young Hainaulter, that he fell asleep. Such an example was never lost upon Longpole, who soon resigned himself to the drowsy god; and Sir Osborne was left the only watcher of the party.

Whether from his greater bodily powers, on which fatigue made but slight impression, or from deeper feelings, and thoughts that would not rest, sleep came not near his eyelids; and, laying at his ease in the fragrant air, a thousand busy memories came thronging through his brain, recalling love, and hope, and joy, and teaching to believe that all might yet be his.

While thus indulging waking visions, he thought he heard a distant horn, and listening, the same sound was again borne upon the wind, from some far part of the forest. It was, however, no warlike note, but evidently proceeded from the horn of some huntsman, who, as Sir Osborne concluded, from the time of the year, was chasing the wolf, to whom no season gives repose.

Falling back into the position from which he had risen to listen, Sir Osborne had again given himself up to thought, when he was once more roused by the sound of voices, and the trampling of horses' feet on the road hard by. Rising silently, without disturbing his companions, he glided part of the way down the path leading to the fountain, and paused amid some oaks and shrubs, through the leaves of which he could observe what passed on the highway, without being seen himself.

Nearly opposite to the cross, already mentioned, appeared two horsemen, one of whom allowed his beast to drink, where the water, gurgling over the basin of the fountain, formed a little streamlet across the road, while the other held in his rein, about a pace behind, as if waiting, with some degree of respect, for his companion. As soon as the horse raised its head, the first cavalier turned round and presented to Sir Osborne's view a fine and princely countenance, whose every feature, whose every glance, bespoke a generous and noble spirit.

In complexion, the stranger was of a deep tanned brown, with his eyes, his hair, and his mustaches nearly black: his brow was broad and clear, his eyes large and full, though shaded by the dark eyelashes that overhung them; his nose

was straight, and perhaps somewhat too long; while his mouth was small, and would have been almost too delicate, had it not been for a certain marked curl of the upper lip, which gave it an expression, not of haughtiness, nor of sternness, but of grave condescending dignity. His dress was a rich hunting suit, which might well become a nobleman of the day, consisting of a green pourpoint, laced with gold, and slashed on the breast; long white hose half covered with his boots, and a short green cloak not descending to his horse's back. His hat was of velvet, with the broad brims slightly turned up round it, and cut in various places so as somewhat to resemble a mural crown, while from the front, thrown over to the back, fell a splendid plume of ostrich feathers which almost reached his shoulder. His only arms appeared to be a dagger in his girdle, and a long heavy sword, which hung from his shoulder in a baldrick of cloth of gold. The other stranger was nearly habited like the first, very little difference existing either in the fashion or the richness of their apparel. Both, also, were tall and vigorous men; and both were in the prime of their days; but the countenance of the second was very different from that of his companion. In complexion he was fair, with small blue eyes, and rather sandy hair, nor would he have been otherwise than handsome, had it not been for a certain narrowness of brow, and wideness of mouth, which gave a gaunt and eager expression to his face, totally opposed to the grand and open countenance of the other.

As we have said, when his horse had done drinking, the first traveller turned towards the spot where Sir Osborne stood, and seemed to listen for a moment. At length he said, "Hear you the hunt now, Count William?"

"No, your Highness," replied the other, "it has swept away towards Aire."

"Then, Sir," rejoined the first, "we are alone;" and drawing his sword from the scabbard, he laid it level before his companion's eyes, continuing abruptly, "what think you of that blade? is it not a good one?" At the same time he fixed his eye upon him, with a firm remarking glance, as if he would have read into his very soul. The other turned as pale as death, and faltered something about its being a most excellent weapon.

"Then," continued the first, "I will ask you, Sir Count—should it not be a bold man, who, knowing the goodness of this sword, and the strength of this arm, and the stoutness of this heart, would yet attempt any thing against my life?

However, Count William of Firstemberg, let me tell you, that should there be such a man in this kingdom, and should he find himself alone with me in a wild forest like this, and fail to make the attempt he meditated, I should look upon him as coward, as well as traitor; and fool, as well as villain." And his dark eye flashed as if it would have struck him to the ground.

Count William* faltered—trembled—and attempted to reply; but his speech failed him; and striking his hand against his forehead, he shook his bridle rein, dug his spurs into his horse's sides, and darted down the road like lightning.

"Slave!" cried the other, as he marked him go, "cowardly slave!" and turning his horse, without further comment, he rode slowly on the other way.

CHAPTER XII.

"This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Thine is th' adventure, thine the victory,
Well has thy fortune turned the die for thee."

DRYDEN.

Sir Osborne immediately turned into the forest, and rousing his companions, called them to horse; but, however, though confessedly the hero of our story, we must leave him for a little time, and follow the traveller we have just left upon the road.

For a considerable way, he rode on musing, and if one might judge from his countenance, his meditations were somewhat bitter; such as might become the bosom of a king, on finding the treachery of the world, the hollowness of friendship the impossibility of securing affection, or any other of the cold lessons which the world will sometimes teach the children of prosperity. At length he paused, and looking to the declining sun, saw the necessity of hastening his progress; whereupon, setting spurs to his horse, he galloped along the road, without

* This circumstance is generally placed by the French anecdotarians some ten years later; but we conceive that the precision of a Dutchman is to be relied on in preference.

much heeding in what direction it led him, till coming to one of those openings, called *carrefours* by the French, where a great many roads met, he stopped to consider his farther route. In the midst, it is true, stood a tall post, which doubtless, in days of yore, pointed out to the inquisitive eye the exact destination to which each of the several paths tended; but old Time, who gets fingering every thing that is nice and good, from the loveliest feature of living beauty, to the grandest monument of ancient art, had not spared even so contemptible a thing as the finger-post; but, like a great mischievous baby, had scratched out the letters with his pocket-knife, leaving no trace of their purport visible.

The traveller rode round it in vain—then paused, and listened, as if to catch the sounds of the distant hunt; but all was now silent. As a last resource, he raised his hunting-horn to his lips, and blew a long and repeated call; but all was hushed and still—even babbling echo, in pure despite, answered not a word.—He blew again, and had the same success. There was an ominous sort of quietness in the air, which, joined with the sultriness of the evening, the expecting taciturnity of the very birds, and some dark heavy clouds that were beginning to roll in lurid masses over the trees, gave notice of an approaching storm.

Some road he must choose, and calculating as nearly as he could, by the position of the sun, he made his election, and spurred along it with all speed. A dropping sound among the green leaves, however, soon showed that the storm was begun, and once having commenced, it was not slow in following up its first attack: the rain came down in torrents, so as to render the whole scene misty, and the lightning, followed by its instant clap of thunder, flickered on every side with flash after flash, dazzling the traveller's sight, and scaring his horse by gleaming across his path, while the inky clouds overhead almost deprived them of other light. In vain he every now and then sought some place of shelter, where the trees seemed thickest; the verdant canopy of the leaves, though impervious to the summer sun, and a good defence against a passing shower, were incapable of resisting a storm like that, and wherever he turned the rain poured through in torrents, and wet him to the skin. Galloping on then, in despair of finding any sufficient covering, he proceeded for nearly half an hour along the forest road, before it opened into the country; and where it did so, instead of finding any nice village to give him rest, and shelter, and food, and fire, the horseman could distinguish nothing but

a wide bare expanse of country, looking dismal and desolate in the midst of the gray deluge that was falling from the sky. About seven or eight miles farther on, he could, indeed, see faintly through the rain, the spire of some little church, giving the only sign of human habitation; except where to the left, in the midst of the heath that there bordered the forest, he perceived the miserable little hut of a charcoal-burner, with a multitude of black hillocks before the door, and a large shed for piling up what was already prepared.

To this, then, as to the nearest place of shelter, the stranger took his way, very different in appearance from what he had been in the morning; his rich dress soaked and soiled, his velvet hat out of all shape or form, his high plume draggled and thin, with all the feather adhering closely to the pen, and, in short, though still bearing the unalienable look of a gentleman, yet in as complete disarray of apparel, as the very worst wetting can produce. Without ceremony, he rode up to the door, sprang off his horse, and entered the cabin, wherein appeared a good woman of about forty, busily piling up, with fresh fuel, a fire of dry boughs, over which hung a large pot of soup for the evening meal. The traveller's tale was soon told, and the dame readily promised him shelter and food, in the name of her husband, who was absent, carrying charcoal to the distant village; and seeing that the storm was likely to last all night, he tied his horse under the shed, placed himself by the side of the fire, aided the good woman to raise it into a blaze, and frankly prepared to make himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit. Well pleased with his easy good humour, the good dame soon grew familiar, gave him a spoon to skim the pot, while she fetched more wood, and bade him make himself at home. In a short time, the husband himself returned, as dripping as the traveller had been, and willingly confirmed all that his wife had promised. Only casting himself, without ceremony, into the chair where the stranger had been sitting,—and which, by-the-way, was the only chair in the place, all the rest being joint-stools,—he addressed him familiarly, saying, "I take this place, by the fire, my good gentleman, because it is the place where I always sit, and this chair, because it is mine; and you know the old proverb

"By right and by reason whatever betide,
A man should be master by his own fire-side."*

* We cannot help calling attention to the scrupulous accuracy of Vonderbrugius! Supposing that he might, in some fit of unwonted

"Faith, you are in the right," cried the traveller, laughing, "so I will content myself with this settle. But let us have something for supper, for on the word of a —— knight, my ride has taught me hunger."

"Give us the soup, dame," cried the charcoal-burner. "Well, I wot, Sir traveller, that you might be treated like a prince, here on the edge of the wood, did not those vile forest laws prevent a poor man from spearing a boar as well as a rich one.—In good truth, the King is to blame to let such laws last."

"Faith, and that is true," cried the traveller, "and heartily to blame too, if his laws stand between me and a good supper. Now would I give a link of this gold chain, for a good steak of wild boar pork, upon those clear ashes."

The cottager looked at his wife, and the cottager's wife looked at her husband, very like two people undecided what to do. "Fie, now!" cried the stranger, "fie, good dame! I will wager a gold piece against a cup of cold water, that if I look in that coffer, I shall find wherewithal to mend our supper."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the charcoal-burner, "thou hast hit it! Faith, thou hast hit it! There it is, my buck, sure enough! Bring it forth, dame, and give us some steaks. But mind," he continued, laying his finger on his lip, with a significant wink, "mind, mum's the word! never fare well and cry roast beef."

"Oh, I'm as close as a mouse," replied the stranger in the same strain; "never fear me, many a stout stag have I overthrown in the King's forests, without asking, with your leave or by your leave of any man."

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the cottager, "thou'rt a brave one! Come, let us be merry, while the thunder rolls without. It will strike the King's palace sooner than my cottage, though we are eating wild boar therein."

In such sort of fit passed the evening till nightfall, and the storm still continuing in its full glory, the traveller was fain to content himself, with such lodging as the cottage afforded, for the night. Though his dress bespoke a rank far higher than their own, neither the cottager nor his wife seemed at all awe-struck or abashed, but quietly examined the gold-lacing of his

imaginativeness, have invented this circumstance, we searched through many tomes for confirmation, when we at last found the whole story alluded to in the exact Montluc; which, though it leave the Dutchman no other merit than that of a compiler, justifies implicit belief in every part of this surprising history.

clothes, declared it was very fine, and seemed to look upon him more as a child does upon a gilded toy, than in any other light. When night was come, the good dame strewed out one corner of the hut with a little straw, piled it high with dry leaves, and the stranger, rolling up his cloak for a pillow, laid it under his head, stretched himself on the rude bed thus prepared, and soon fell into a profound sleep.

Taking advantage of his nap, we will now return to Sir Osborne, who with all speed roused his companions from their slumbers, and bade them mount and follow. With military alacrity, Longpole was on his horse in a moment, and ready to set out; but for his part, the young Hainaulter yawned and stretched, and somewhat bewildered, looked as if he would fain have asked whither the Knight was going to lead him. A word, however, from Longpole hurried his motions, and they were both soon upon the track of Sir Osborne, who was already some way on the little bridle-path by which they had arrived at the grassy mound where they had been sleeping. When he reached the road they had formerly left, he paused, and waited their coming up.

"Now, Longpole," cried he, "give me your judgment, does this road lead to any crossing, or not? Quick! for we must not waste a moment."

"Most certainly it does, my Lord," replied the shield-bearer, "most probably to the spot where they all meet in the heart of the wood."

"Perhaps he may tell us with more certainty," said the Knight; and changing his language to French, for the ear of the young Hainaulter, he asked the same question.

"Oh yes, certainly," replied Frederick, "it leads to the great Carrefour; I have hunted here a hundred times."

"Then, are we on French ground or Flemish?" demanded the Knight.

"The French claim it," replied the youth, "but we used to hunt here in their despite."

"Quick then, let us on," cried Sir Osborne, "and keep all your eyes on the road before, to see if any one crosses it."

"He has something in his head, I'll warrant," said Longpole to their new companion, as they galloped after Sir Osborne.

"Oh, our Lord knows the trade of war; and will snuff you out an enemy, without ever seeing him, better than a beagle dog with bandy legs and a yellow spot over his eyes."

"Halt!" cried the knight, suddenly reining in his horse as

they came within sight of the Carrefour we have already mentioned. "Longpole, keep close under that tree! Frederick, here by my side—Back him into the wood, my good youth—that will do. Let every one keep their eyes upon the crossing, and when you see a horseman pass, mark which road he takes. How dark the sky is growing. Hark! is not that a horse's feet?"

They had not remained many minutes, when the cavalier we have spoken of appeared at the Carrefour, examined in vain the finger-post, sounded his horn once or twice, as we have described, and then again took his way to the left.

"Where does that road lead?" demanded the Knight, addressing the young Hainaulter.

"It opens out on the great heath, between the forest and Lillers, my Lord," answered Frederick.

"Is there any village, or castle, or house near?" asked Sir Osborne, quickly.

"None, none!" replied Frederick, "it is as bare as my hand,—perhaps a Charbonier's cottage or so," he added, correcting himself.

"Let us on then," replied the Knight. "we are going to have a storm, but we must not mind that;" and putting his horse into a quick pace, he led his followers upon the track of the traveller, taking care never to lose sight of him entirely, and yet contriving to conceal himself, whenever any turn of the road might have exposed him to the view of the person he pursued. The rain poured upon his head, the lightning flashed upon his path; but still the Knight followed on without a moment's pause, till he had seen the traveller take refuge in the cottage of the charcoal-burner. Then, and not till then, he paused, spurred his horse through some thick bushes on the edge of the wood, and obtained as much shelter as the high beeches of the forest could afford; nor did he pause at the first or the thickest trees he came to, but took particular pains to select a spot, where, though concealed by a high screen of underwood, they could yet distinguish clearly the door of the hut, through the various breaks in the branches. Here having dismounted with his followers, he stationed Frederick at a small opening, to watch the cottage, while he and Longpole carefully provided for the security and refreshment of their horses, as far as circumstances would admit, although the long forest-grass was the only food that could be procured for them, and the storm still continued pouring through the very thickest parts of the wood. To obviate this, the Knight and his shield-

bearer plied the underwood behind them with their swords, and soon obtained a sufficient supply of leafy branches, to interweave with the lower boughs of the trees overhead, and thus to secure themselves against the rain.

While thus employed, Frederick gave notice, as he had been commanded, that some one approached the cottage, which proved to be the Charbonier himself, returning with his mule; and after his arrival, their watch remained undisturbed by the coming of any visiter till nightfall.

As soon as it was dark, Sir Osborne allotted to his followers and to himself, the portion of the night that each was to watch, taking for his own period the first four hours; after which, Longpole's turn succeeded; and lastly, towards morning, came the young Hainaulter.

With his eye fixed upon the light in the cottage, and his ear eager for every sound, Sir Osborne passed the time till the flame gradually died away, and flashing more and more faintly, at last sunk entirely. However, the dark outline of the hut was still to be seen, and the ear had now more power; for the storm had greatly passed away, and the only sounds that it had left, were the thunder rolling faintly round the far limits of the horizon, and the dropping of the water from the leaves and branches of the forest. Towards midnight, Sir Osborne roused Longpole, and recommending him to watch carefully, he threw himself down by the young Hainaulter, and was soon asleep.

Somewhat tired with the fatigues of the day, the Knight slept soundly, and did not wake, till Frederick, who had replaced Longpole on the watch, shook him by the arm; and starting up, he found that it was day.

"Hist, hist! my Lord," cried the youth, "here is Shoenvelt and his party."

Sir Osborne looked through the branches in the direction the young man pointed, and clearly distinguished a party of seven spearmen, slowly moving along the side of the forest, at about five hundred yards' distance from the spot where they lay. "It is Shoenvelt's height and form," said the Knight, measuring the leader with his eye, "and that looks like Wilsten by his side—but how are you sure?"

"Because I know the arms of both," replied Frederic.—"See, they are going to hide in the wood, close by the high road from Lillers to Aire."

As he spoke, the body of horsemen stopped, and, one after another, disappeared in the wood, convincing Sir Osborne that the young Hainaulter was right.

"Then nerve your arm, and grasp your lance, Frederick," said the Knight, with a smile, "for if you do well, even this very day, you may win your golden spurs. Wake Longpole there! we must be all prepared."

The youth's eyes gleamed with delight, and snatching up his casque, he shook Longpole roughly, and ran to tighten his horse's girths, while Sir Osborne explained to the yeoman that they were on the eve of an encounter.

"Odds life!" cried Longpole, "I'm glad to hear it, my Lord. I find it vastly cold, sleeping in a steel jacket, and shall be glad of a few backstrokes to warm me. You say there are seven of them. It's an awkward number to divide, but you will take three, my Lord—I will do my best for two and a half, and then there will be one and a half for Master Frederick here. We could not leave the poor youth less, in honesty, for I dare say he is as ready for such a breakfast as we are."

The bustle of preparation now succeeded for a moment or two; and when all was ready, and the whole party once more on horseback, the Knight led the way to a gap, from whence he could issue out upon the plain, without running the risk of entangling his horse in the underwood. Here, stationing himself behind the bushes to the left, he gave orders to Longpole and Frederick, not to stir an inch whatever they saw, till he set the example; and then grasping his lance, he sat like marble, with his eyes fixed upon the cottage.

In about a quarter of an hour, the door of the hut opened, and the cottager running to the shed, brought up the traveller's horse. By this time, he seemed to have discovered that his guest was of higher rank than he imagined, for when the stranger came forth, he cast himself upon his knees, holding the bridle, and remained in that situation till the other had sprung into the saddle.

Dropping some pieces of gold into his host's hand, the traveller now shook his rein; and putting his horse into an easy pace, took his way over the plain, at about three hundred yards distance from the forest, proceeding quietly along totally unconscious of danger. A moment, however, put an end to his security, for he had not passed above a hundred yards beyond the spot where the Knight was concealed, when a galloping of horse was heard, and Shoenvelt's party, with levelled lances, and horses in charge, rushed forth from the wood upon him.

In an instant, Sir Osborne's visor was down, his spear was in the rest, and his horse in full gallop.—"Darnley! Darnley!"

shouted he, with a voice that made the welkin ring. "Darnley to the rescue! Traitor of Shoenvelt, turn to your death!"

"Darnley! Darnley!" shouted Longpole, following his lord.

"St. George for Darnley! down with the traitors."

The shout was not lost upon either Shoenvelt or the traveller. The one instantly turned, with several of his men, to attack the Knight; the other, seeing unexpected aid at hand, fell back towards Darnley, and with admirable skill and courage, defended himself with nothing but his sword, against the lances of the marauders, who—their object being more to take him living, than to kill him—lost the advantage which they would have otherwise had, by his want of armour.

Like a wild beast, raging with hatred and fury, Shoenvelt charged towards the Knight, his lance quivering in his hand with the angry force of his grasp. On, on, bore Sir Osborne at full speed towards him, his bridle in his left hand, his shield upon his breast, his lance firmly fixed in the rest, and levelled in such manner as to avoid its breaking. In a moment they met. Shoenvelt's spear struck Sir Osborne's shield, and aimed firmly and well, partially traversed the iron; but the Knight throwing back his left arm with vast force, snapped the head of the lance in twain. In the meanwhile, his own spear, charged at the marauder's throat with unerring exactness, passed clean through the gorget piece and the upper rim of the corslet, and came bloody out at the back.—You might have heard the iron plates and bones cranch as the lance rent its way through.—Down went Shoenvelt, horse and man, borne over by the force of the Knight's course. "Darnley, Darnley!" shouted Sir Osborne, casting from him the spear which he could not disengage from the marauder's neck, and drawing his sword. "Darnley, Darnley! to the rescue! Now, Wilsten, now!" and turning, he galloped up to where the traveller, with Longpole and Frederick by his side, firmly maintained his ground against the adventurers.

Wilsten's lance had been shivered by Longpole; and now, with his sword drawn, on the other side of the melée, he was aiming a desperate blow at the unarmed head of the traveller, who defended himself from a spearman in front; but at that moment the Knight charged the adventurer through the midst, overturning all that came in his way, and shouting loud his battle cry, to call his adversary's attention, and divert him from the fatal blow which he was about to strike. The plan succeeded. Wilsten heard the sound; and seeing Shoenvelt dead upon the plain, turned furiously on Darnley. Urging their

horses between all the others, they met in the midst, and thus seemed to separate the rest of the combatants, who, for a moment or two, looked on inactive; while the swords of the two champions played about each other's heads, and sought out the weaker parts of their harness. Both were strong, and active, and skilful; and though Sir Osborne was decidedly superior, it was long before the combat appeared to turn in his favour. At length, by a quick movement of his horse, the Knight brought himself close to the adventurer's side, and gaining a fair blow, plunged the point of his sword through his corslet into his bosom.

At that moment, the combat having been renewed by the rest, one of the marauders struck the Knight from behind so violently on the head, that it shook him in the saddle, and breaking the fastenings of his helmet, the casque came off and rolled upon the plain. But the blow was too late to save Wilsten, who now lay dead under his horse's feet; and Sir Osborne well repaid it by a single back stroke at this new opponent's thigh.

By this time only two of the marauders remained on horseback, so well had Longpole, the traveller, and Frederick, done their devoir; and these two were not long in putting spurs to their steeds, and flying with all speed, leaving the Knight and his companions masters of the field. Looking round, however, Sir Osborne missed the gallant young Hainaulter, while he saw his horse flying masterless over the plain. "Where is Frederick?" cried the Knight, springing to the ground.—"By my knighthood, if he be dead, we have paid our victory dear!"

"Not dead, Monseigneur, but hurt," said a faint voice near; and turning, he beheld the poor youth fallen to the earth, and leaning on one arm, while with the other he was striving to take off his casque, from the bars of which the blood dripped out fast upon the green sward. Darnley hastened to his aid; and having disencumbered him of his helmet, discovered a bad wound in his throat, which, however, did not appear to him to be mortal; and Longpole, with the stranger, having dismounted, and come to his aid, they contrived to stanch the bleeding, which was draining away his life.

When this was done, the noble traveller turned towards Darnley. "Sir Knight," said he, with the calm dignified tone of one seldom used to address an equal, "how you came here, or why, I cannot tell, but it seems as if Heaven had sent you on purpose to save my life. However that may be, I will say

of you, that never did a more famous knight wield sword; and therefore, as the best soldiers in Europe may be proud of such a companion, let me beg you to take this collar, till I can thank you better"—and he cast over the Knight's neck the golden chain of the order of St. Michael, with which he was decorated.

"As for you, good Squire," he continued, addressing Longpole, "you are worthy of your lord, therefore kneel down."

"'Faith, your Worship," answered the yeoman, "I never knelt to any man in my life, and never will to any but a king, while I'm in this world!"

"Fie! fie! Heartley," cried Sir Osborne; "bend your knee. It is the King, man!—Do you not understand?—It is King Francis!"

"Oh, that changes the case," cried Longpole; "I crave your Highness' pardon. I did not know your Grace"—and he bent his knee to the King.

Francis drew his sword, and laid it on the yeoman's shoulder; then striking him three light blows, he said, "In the name of God, our Lady, and St. Denis, I dub thee Knight. *Avance, bon Chevalier!* Noble, or not noble, from this moment I make you such."

Longpole rose, and the King turned to the young Hainaulter, who sitting near, and supporting himself by his sword, had looked on with longing eyes. "No one of my gallant defenders must be forgotten," said Francis. "Knighthood, my good youth, will hardly pay your wound."

"Oh yes, yes!" cried Frederick, eagerly, "indeed it will, your Highness, more than repay it."

"Then be it so," replied the King, knighting him. "However, remember, fair Knights, that Francis of France stints not here his gratitude, or you may think him niggard of his thanks. We will have you all go with us, and we will find better means to repay your timely aid.—I know not, Sir," he continued, turning to Sir Osborne, and resuming the more familiar first person singular, "whether I heard your battle cry aright, and whether I now see the famous Lord Darnley, the Knight of Burgundy, who in wars, now happily ended, often turned the tide of battle in favour of the Emperor."—Sir Osborne bowed his head.—"Then, Sir," continued Francis, "I will say, that never did monarch receive so much injury or so much benefit from the hand of one noble adversary."

CHAPTER XIII.

"We talk in ladies' chambers, love and news."
COWLEY.

ALL was bustle and preparation at the Court of England. For the two most magnificent monarchs of the world were about to contend with each other, not with the strife of arms, nor by a competition of great deeds, but in pomp, in pageant, and in show,—in empty glitter and unfruitful display. However that may be, the palace and all its precincts became the elysium of tailors, embroiderers, and sempstresses. There might you see many a shady form gliding about from apartment to apartment, with smiling looks and extended shears, or armed with ell-wands more potent than Mercury's rod, driving many a poor soul to perdition, and transforming his goodly acres into velvet suits, with tags of cloth of gold.

The courts of the King's Palace of Bridewell rang from morning till night with the neighing of steeds, the clanking of harness, and the sound of the trumpet; and the shops and warehouses of London were nearly emptied of gold, of jewels, and brocade. Men and women were all wild to out-do their French equals in splendour and display; and, in short, the mad dog of extravagance seemed to have bit all the world.

In a small room in the palace, not far from the immediate apartments of the Queen, sat a very lovely girl, whom the reader has not spoken to for a long time—no other than Lady Katrine Bulmer—who, with a more pensive air than was usual with her, sat deep in the mysteries of bibs and tuckers, chaperons and fraises, muntuas and hanging sleeves, which last had, for the moment, regained their ascendancy in the public task, and were now ornamented with more extraordinary trimmings than ever.

By her side sat her two women, Geraldine and Bridget, whose fingers were going with the rapidity of lightning, quickened into excessive haste by the approaching removal of the Court to Calais, which was to take place in the short space of one week, while their mistress's dresses were not half-finished, and their own not began.

made her gay face look grave, is nothing to any one. Perhaps it might be, that she had not as many dresses as Lady Winifred Stanton: perhaps she had seen a jewel that she could not afford to buy: perhaps Higglemeasure the merchant had brought her a brocade that the Queen would not let her wear: perhaps she was vexed at not having seen Lord Darby for eight days—the last time having been on the same morning that Sir Osborne Maurice had been driven from the Court. Perhaps she was angry with herself for having parted from him with an affectation of indifference which she did not feel.

Well aware, that now Wolsey had returned, the pleasure of seeing her lover almost daily, must cease; and that a stiff and formal interview, in presence of the whole court, or a few brief sentences at a mask or pageant, was all they could hope to attain, Lady Katrine did indeed repent that she had suffered her own caprices to mingle any bitter in the few happy hours that fate had sent her.

Though she had some vanity too, she had not enough to prevent her seeing and regretting that she had been in fault: and she made those resolutions of amendment, which a light spirit often forms every hour, and breaks before the next: and thus sewing and thinking, and thinking and sewing, and stitching-in excellent determinations in every seam as she went along, she revolved in her own mind all the various events that had lately happened at the court.

It may well be supposed, that the sudden disappearance of Sir Osborne Maurice, at the same time as that of Lady Constance de Grey, had given rise to many strange rumours, none of which, of course, did Lady Katrine believe: and, to do her justice, although perhaps she was not at all sorry that Constance had judged it right to put an end to any farther proceedings regarding her marriage with Lord Darby, by removing herself from the Court; yet Lady Katrine suffered no one to hint a doubt in her presence regarding her friend's conduct. But that which was much more in Constance's favour, was the good word of the Queen herself, who at once silenced scandal by saying, that she would take upon herself to assert, that Lady Constance de Grey had never dreamed of flying from the Court with Sir Osborne Maurice. It was very natural, she observed, that a young heiress of rank, and wealth, and a proud family, should take refuge any where, rather than contract a marriage to which she had always expressed her repugnance; and without meaning offence to the

What it was that occupied Lady Katrine's thoughts, and

Lord Cardinal, she could not think but that Constance was right.

Notwithstanding this, many were the tales that were circulated by the liemongers of the Court; and it hurt the really generous heart of Lady Katrine to hear them. Meditating then over all these circumstances, nearly in the same desultory way in which they are here written down, she took little notice, when one of the servants of the palace called her maid Geraldine out of the room. After a short while, Geraldine came back, and called out Bridget, and still Lady Katrine continued to work on. After a moment or two she ceased, and leaning her head on her hand, gave herself up to still deeper thought, when suddenly the door opened, and Lord Darby presented himself.

Too much taken by surprise to give herself any airs, Lady Katrine looked up with a smile of unaffected delight, and Darby, reading his welcome in her eyes, advanced, and casting his arm round her, imprinted a warm kiss on the full arching lips, that smiled too temptingly for human philosophy to resist. Luckily did it happen that he did so within the first minute, for, had he waited later, Lady Katrine might not so easily have pardoned his boldness. However, her only remark was, "Well, Darby, you seem to think it so much a matter of course, that I suppose I must let it pass as such too. But don't look so happy, man, lest I should take it into my head to make you look otherwise before you go."

"Nay, nay, Katrine," said Lord Darby, "not so, when I come solely for the purpose of asking you to make me happy."

The Earl spoke seriously, tenderly, and there was so much hope and affection, and feeling in his glance, that Lady Katrine felt there must be some meaning in his words. "If you love me, Darby," cried she, "tell me what you mean—and make haste, for my maids will be back, and you know you must not stay here."

"Yes, but I may, Katrine," replied he; "no one but you can now send me away.—In a word, dear girl, to put an end to suspense, I have the King's and the Cardinal's consent to ask your hand, and the Queen's to seek you here—Will you refuse me?"

Lady Katrine looked at him for a moment, to be sure—quite sure that what she heard was true; then dropping her head upon his shoulder, she burst into a violent flood of tears. So sudden, so delightful was the change in all her feelings, that she was surprised out of all her reserve, all her coquetry, and

could only murmur, "Refuse you—no!" But starting up, at length she cried, "I have a great mind that I will too. Don't think that I love you—No, I hate you most bitterly for making me cry—you did it on purpose, beyond doubt, and I won't forgive you easily—so, to begin your punishment, go away, and leave me directly."

"Nay, Katrine, I must disobey," replied the Earl, "for I have other news to tell you—your relation, Lord Orham, is dead."

"My relation?" cried Lady Katrine, whose tears were ever dried as soon as shed.

"Oh yes! I remember, he was my great-grandfather's seventieth cousin by mother's side. One was descended from Shem, and the other from Japheth, in the time of the flood, or before, for aught I know. Well, what of my antediluvian relative—oh, he is dead, you say—may he rest with Noah!"

"But you must take mourning for him," said Lord Darby, laughing, "indeed you must."

"Certainly," replied Lady Katrine, "a coif and a widow's hood. But I won't be teased, Darby—I will tease every body, and nobody shall tease me.—As to going into mourning for the old miser just now, when all my finery is ready made, to show myself at Guisnes, and captivate all hearts, and make you fight fifty single combats,—I won't do it. There, go and ask my singing-bird to moult in the month of May, or any thing else of the same kind, but don't ask me to leave one single row of lace off my sleeve, for the miser—I disown him."

"Hush, hush, hush!" cried the Earl, "take care he does not come back, and disown you, for otherwise you are his heiress."

"I!" exclaimed Lady Katrine, "Am I his heiress? Now, Mistress Fortune, I am your very humble servant. Bless us, what a much more important person Katrine Bulmer will be, with all the heavy coffers of her late dear cousin, than when she was poor Katrine Bulmer, the Queen's woman—Darby I give you notice: I shall not marry you—I could wed a Duke now, doubtless—who shall it be? All the Dukes have wives, I do believe. However, there is many a peer richer than you are, and though you do count cousinship with kings, gold is my passion now, so I will sell myself to him that has the most."

Though she spoke in jest, still Lord Darby was mortified; for what he could have borne and laughed at in the poor and fortuneless girl that had captivated his heart, his spirit was too

proud to endure, where a mercenary motive could be for a moment attributed to him. "Nay, Katrine," said he, "if the fortune that is now yours, gives you any wish of change, your promises to me are null; I render them back to you from this moment."

"Why they *were made* under very different circumstances, you must allow, Lord Darby," replied she, assuming a most malicious air of gravity, and delighted at having found, for the first time in her life, the means of putting her lover out of humour.

"They were, Lady Katrine," answered the Earl, much more deeply hurt than she imagined, "and therefore they are at an end—I have nothing farther then but to take my leave."

"Good by, my Lord, good by!" cried she. "Heaven bless and prosper you," and with the utmost tranquillity she watched him approach the door. "Now shall I let him go or not?" said she. "Oh woman! woman! you are a great fool!—Darby—Darby!" she added, in a soft voice, "come back to your Katrine."

Lord Darby turned back and caught her in his arms. "Dear teasing girl!" cried he, "why, why will you strive to wring a heart that loves you?"

"Nay, Darby, if things were rightly stated, it is I who have cause to be offended rather than you," answered the Lady. "What right had you, sir, to think that the heart of Katrine Bulmer was so base, so mean, as to be changed by the possession of a few paltry counters? Own that you have done me wrong this instant, or I will never forgive you. Down upon your knee—a kneeling confession! or you are condemned beyond hope of grace."

Lord Darby was fain to obey his gay lady's behest, and bending his knee, he freely confessed himself guilty of all the crimes she thought proper to charge him withal; in the midst of which, however, he was interrupted by the entrance of an attendant sent by the Queen to call Lady Katrine to her presence.

The lady laughed and blushed, at being found with Lord Darby at her feet; and the Earl, not particularly well pleased at the interruption, turned to the Usher, saying, with the sort of nonchalant air which he often assumed, "Well, Sir, before you go, tell the lady, when it was you last found me on my knees, to any of the fair dames of the court?"

"Never, my Lord, so please you, that I know of," answered the man, somewhat surprised.

"Well then," rejoined Darby, "next time, knock at the door, for fear you should. In which case, you might chance to be thrown down stairs by the collar."

"Hush, hush, Darby!" cried Lady Katrine, "I must go to her Highness. Doubtless we shall not meet again for a long while, so fare you well!" and tripping away after the Usher, without other adieu, she left her lover to console himself in her absence, as best he might.

On entering the Queen's apartment, she found her royal mistress alone with the King, and according to etiquette, was drawing back instantly, when Katharine called her forward: "Come hither, my wild namesake," said the Queen, "his Grace the King wishes to speak with you. Come near, and answer him all his questions."

Lady Katrine advanced, and kneeling on a velvet cushion at Henry's feet, prepared to reply to whatever he might ask, with as much propriety as she could command; although the glad news of the morning had raised her spirits to a pitch of uncontrollable joyousness, which even the presence of the imperious monarch himself could hardly keep within bounds.

"Well, my merry mistress," said the King, seeing in her laughing eyes the ebullition of her heart's gladness; "it seems that you do not pine yourself to death, for the loss of Sir Osborne Maurice?"

"I deeply regret, your Grace," said Lady Katrine, turning grave for a moment, "most deeply, that Sir Osborne Maurice should have incurred your royal displeasure, for he seemed to me as perfect a knight, and as noble a gentleman, as I ever saw. But in no other respect do I regret his absence."

"Well, we have tried to supply his place with one you may like better," said Henry. "Have you seen the Earl of Darby,—ha? What think you of the exchange, pretty one?"

"I thank your Grace's bounty," said the gay girl. "I have seen his Lordship, and looked at him well; and though he be neither so handsome as Narcissus, nor so wise as Solon, he may do well enough for such a giddy thing as I am. Saving your Grace's presence, one does not look for perfection in a husband: one might as well hope to find a pippin without a spot."

"Thou art a malapert chit, Kate," said the Queen, laughing, "sure I am, if your royal lord was not right gentle in his nature, he would be angry with your wild chattering."

'Nay! let her run on," said the King, "a tongue like her's

has no guile. If you are contented, sweetheart," he added, addressing Lady Katrine, "that is enough."

"Oh yes! quite contented, your Grace," answered she, "I have not had a new plaything so long, that a husband is quite a treat—I suppose he must be sent to the menage first, like the jennet your Highness gave me, to learn his paces."

"If he was as untamed as you are, Mistress," answered the King, "he might need it. But to another subject, fair one. You were with Sir Osborne Maurice and his party, when he encountered the rioters near Rochester. Some sad treasons are but too surely proved against that luckless young man; yet I would fain believe that his misconduct went not to the extent which was at first reported; especially as the accusation was made by that most ruffianly traitor, Sir Payan Wileton, whom the keen eye of my zealous Wolsey, has discovered to be stained with many crimes too black for words to paint. Now, among other things it was urged, that this Sir Osborne was in league with those Rochester mutineers, the greatest proof of which, was their letting him quietly pass with so small a party, when they boldly attacked the company of Lord Thomas Howard, with ten times the force."

Lady Katrine could hardly wait till the King had ceased. "This shows," cried she, at length, "how the keenest wisdom, and the noblest heart, may be abused by a crafty tale. Sir Osborne knew nothing of the rioters, my Lord; he took every way to avoid them, because I, unluckily, having neither father nor brother to protect me, encumbered him by my presence; otherwise, without doubt, he would have delivered the poor priest they had with them by his lance, and not by fair words. Never believe a word of it, your Grace. His shield-bearer, indeed, while the Knight drew up his men to defend us, to the best of his power, recognised the leader of the tumultuaries, as an old fellow-soldier, and craved leave of his Lord to go and demand a free passage for us, by which means we escaped. Oh, my Lord, as you are famous for your clemency and justice, examine well the whole tale of that Sir Payan Wileton, and it will be found false and villanous, as are all the rest of his actions."

"You are eloquent, lady fair," said the King, with a smile, "we will tell Darby to look to it.—But as to Sir Payan Wileton, his baseness is now known to us, and as we progress down to Dover, we will send a sergeant-at-arms to bring him with us to Calais, where we will, with our council, hear and judge the whole. Then if he be the man we think him, not

only shall he restore to the old Lord Fitzbernard the Lordship of Chilham and the Stewardship of Dover, but shall stoop his head to the axe without grace or pardon, as I live.—But say, know you aught of Lady Constance de Grey, in whose secrets you are supposed to have had a share? Laugh not, pretty one, for by my life it shall go hard with you, if you tell not the truth."

"Oh, please your Grace, don't have my head cut off," cried Lady Katrine, seeing, notwithstanding the King's threat, that he was in one of his happier moods. "I never told a lie in my life, except one day when I said I did not love your Highness, and that was when you put off the pageant of the *Castle Dolorous* till after Pentecost, and I wanted it directly. But on my word, as I hope to be married in a year, and a widow in God's good time, I know no more of where Constance de Grey is, or where she went, or when, or how, than the child unborn."

"Did she never speak to you thereof, my saucy Mistress?" demanded Henry. "You consorted with her much, 'twere strange if she did not let something fall concerning her purposes, and she a woman too."

"I wish I had a secret," said Lady Katrine, half-apart, half-aloud, "just to show how a woman can keep counsel, if it were but in spite.—Good, your Grace," she continued, "you do not think that Constance would trust her private thoughts to such a light-headed thing as I am. But, to set your Highness' mind at ease, I vow and protest, by the love and duty I bear to you, and my royal Mistress—by my conscience, which is tender—and by my honour, which is strong,—that I know nothing of Lady Constance de Grey, and that even in my very best imaginings, I cannot divine where she is gone."

"Your Highness may believe her," said the Queen; "wild as she is, she would not stain her lips with the touch of falsehood, I am sure. Get ye gone, Kate, and hasten your sempstresses, for we shall set out a day before it was intended, and mind you plume up your brightest feathers, for we must outdo the Frenchwomen."

"Oh, good, your Grace! I shall never be ready in time," replied the young lady. "Besides, they tell me I must put on mourning for my fiftieth cousin by the side of Adam, old Orham, the miser. If I do, it shall be gold crape, trimmed with cobwebs I declare; and so I humbly take my final passage both your Graces."

Thus saying, she rose from the cushion, dropped a curtsey to the King and Queen, and tripped [illegible] eek, they [illegible] arry them [illegible] procure, by [illegible] and who, as [illegible] own apartments.

Common bustle, and ordinary preparation, may be easily imagined. Every one can, without difficulty, figure to themselves the turmoil preparatory to a ball where there are six daughters to marry, with much blood and very little money. The lady mother scolding the housekeeper in her room, and the housekeeper scolding all the servants in her's;—a reasonable number of upholsterers, decorators, floor-chalkers, confectioners, milliners; much talking to very little purpose; scheming, drilling, and dressing; agitation on the part of the young ladies, and calculation on the part of their mamma.—And at the end of a few weeks the matter is done and over. But no mind, however vast may be its powers of conceiving a bustle, can imagine any thing like the Court of Westminster for the three days prior to the King's departure for Canterbury.

So continual were the demands upon every kind of artisan, that the impossibility of executing them, threw several into despair. One tailor, who is reported to have undertaken to furnish fifty embroidered suits in three days, on beholding the mountain of gold and velvet that cumbered his shop-board, saw, like Brutus, the impossibility of victory, and, with Roman fortitude, fell on his own shears. Three armourers are said to have been completely melted with the heat of their furnaces; and an unfortunate goldsmith swallowed molten silver to escape the persecutions of the day.

The road from London to Canterbury was covered during one whole week with carts and wagons, mules, horses, and soldiers; and so great was the confusion, that marshals were at length stationed to keep the whole in order, which of course increased the said confusion a hundred fold. So many were the ships passing between Dover and Calais, that the historians affirm, that they jostled each other on the road, like a herd of great black porkers; and it is known as a fact, that the number of persons collected in the good town of Calais, was more than it could lodge, so that not only the city itself, but all the villages round about were full to the overflowing.

At length the King set out, accompanied by an immense train, and left London comparatively a desert; while as he went from station to station, he seemed like a shepherd driving all the finer classes of the country before him, and leaving not a straggler behind. His farther progress, however, was "you will time at Canterbury, by the news that the Emperor Charles, his bride's nephew, was on the sea before Dover, further down to Dover with us to Calais" excuse of relationship for visiting the English reality conducted thither solely by the wish to judge the whole

break the good understanding of the English and French monarchs; or rather to ensure that no treaty contrary to his interest, should be negotiated at the approaching meeting.

With that we have nothing to do; and it is a maxim which an historian should always follow, never to mind any body's business but his own. We shall therefore only say, that the King and Wolsey, occupied with the reception of the Emperor, and his entertainment, during the short time he stayed, entirely forgot Sir Payan Wileton till they reached Dover, when some one happening to call it a *chilly morning*, put Chilham Castle in Wolsey's head, (for on such little pivots turn all the wheels of the world,) and immediately a sergeant-at-arms, with a body of horse-archers, was sent to arrest the worthy Knight, and to bring him to Calais, for which port the King and the whole court embarked immediately after; and with a fair wind and a fine sky, arrived in safety towards the evening.

CHAPTER XIV.

With clouds and storms
Around thee thrown, tempest on tempest rolled.
THOMSON.

PASSING over all the consultations that took place between the Prioress of Richborough, Dr. Wilbraham, and Lady Constance de Grey, regarding the means of crossing the sea to France with greater security—although manifold were the important considerations therein discussed, we shall merely arrive at the conclusion to which they came at length, and which was ultimately determined by the voice of the Prioress. This was, that for several days, Lady Constance and Mrs. Margaret should remain at the convent as nuns, paying a very respectable sum for their board and lodging, while Dr. Wilbraham was to take up his abode at a cottage hard by. By this means, the Superior said, they would avoid any search which the Cardinal might have instituted to discover them, in vessels of passage between France and England; and at the end of a week, they would easily find some foreign ship, which would carry them over to Boulogne. Such a one, she undertook to procure, by means of a fisherman who supplied the convent: and who, as

she boasted, knew every ship that sailed through the Channel, from the biggest man-of-war to the meanest carvel.

We shall now leave in silence also, the time which Lady Constance passed in the convent. Vonderbrugius, who, as the sagacious reader has doubtless observed, had a most extraordinary partiality for detailing little particulars, and incidents that are of no manner of consequence, here occupies sixteen pages, with a correct and minute account of every individual day, telling how many masses the nuns sung, how often they fasted in the week, and how often they ate meat; and, not content with relating all that concerned Lady Constance, he indulges in some very illiberal insinuations in regard to the Prioress, more than hinting that she loved her bottle, and had a pet confessor.

Maintaining, however, our grave silence upon this subject, as not only irrelevant but ungentlemanlike, we shall merely say, that the days passed tranquilly enough with Lady Constance, although, like the timid creatures of the forest, whom the continual tyranny of the strong over the inoffensive, has taught to start even at a sound, she would tremble at every little circumstance, which for a moment interrupted the dull calm of the convent's solitude.

A week passed in this manner, and yet the Prioress declared her old fisherman had heard of no vessel that could forward Constance on her journey, though the young lady became uneasy at the delay, and pressed her much to make all necessary inquiries. At length, happening one morning to express her uneasiness to Mrs. Margaret, the shrewd waiting-woman, who, with an instinctive sagacity inherent in chamber-maids, knew a thousand times more of the world than either her mistress or Dr. Wilbraham, at once solved the mystery by saying,—

"Lord love you, Lady, there will never be a single ship in the Channel that you will hear of, so long as you pay a gold mark a day to the Prioress while we stay."

"I would rather give her a hundred marks to let me go," replied Constance, "than a single mark to keep me. But what is to be done, Margaret?"

"Oh, if you will let me but promise fifty marks, Lady," replied the maid, "I will warrant that we are in France in three days."

Lady Constance willingly gave her all manner of leave and license, and, accordingly, that very night, Mrs. Margaret told the chamberer, under the most solemn vows of secrecy, that her lady intended to give the Prioress, as a gift to the convent,

fifty golden marks, on the day that she took ship. "But," said the abigail, "it costs the poor lady so much, what with paying the chaplain's keep at the cottage, and my wage money which you know I must have, that her purse is running low, and I fear me, she will not be able to do as much for the house as she intends.—But mind, you promised to tell no one."

"As I hope for salvation, it shall never pass my lips!" replied the chamberer; and away she ran to the refectory, where she bound the refectory-woman by a most tremendous vow, not to reveal the tidings she was about to communicate. The refectory-woman vowed with a great deal of facility; and the moment the chamberer was gone, she carried in a jelly to the Prioress, where, with a low curtsey, and an important whisper, she communicated to the Superior the important news. Thereupon, the Prioress was instantly smitten with a violent degree of anxiety about Lady Constance's escape, and sending down to the fisherman, she commanded him to find a ship instantly, going to France. To which the fisherman replied, that he knew of no ship going exactly to France, but that there was one lying off the sands, which would doubtless take the lady over for a few broad pieces.

Thus were the preliminaries for Constance's escape brought about, in a very short space of time; and the fisherman having arranged with the captain, that he was to take the lady, the chaplain, and the waiting-maid, to Boulogne for ten George nobles, early the next morning Lady Constance took leave of the Prioress, made her the stipulated present, and, accompanied by good Dr. Wilbraham and her woman, followed the fisherman to the sands, where his boat waited to convey them to a vessel that lay about a mile from the shore.

The sea was calm and tranquil, but to Constance, who had little of a heroine in her nature, it seemed very rough; and every time the boat rose over a wave, she fancied that it must inevitably pitch under the one that followed. However, their passage to the ship was soon over, and as she looked at the high black sides of the vessel, the lady found a greater degree of security in its aspect, imagining it better calculated to battle with the wild waves, than the little flimsy bark that had borne her thither.

The ship, the firsherman had informed her, was a foreign merchantman, and as she came alongside, a thousand strange tongues, gabbling all manner of languages, met her ear. It was a floating tower of Babel. In the midst of the confusion and bustle, which occurred in getting herself and her compa-

nions upon the deck, she saw that one of the sailors attempted to spring from the ship into the boat, but was restrained by those about him, who unceremoniously beat him back with marling spikes, and rope's ends; and for the time she beheld no more of him, though she thought she heard some one uttering invectives and complaints in the English language.

For the first few moments after she was on deck, what with the giddiness occasioned by her passage in the boat, and the agitation of getting on board, she could remark nothing that was passing around her; but the moment she had sufficiently recovered to regard the objects by which she was surrounded, a new cause of apprehension presented itself, for close by her side, evidently as commander of the vessel, stood no less distinguished a person than the Portingal captain, of whom honourable mention is made in the first volume of this sage history, and whose proboscis was not easily to be forgot.

It was too late now, however, to recede; and her only resource was to draw down her nun's veil, hoping thus to escape being recognised. For some time, she had reason to believe that the disguise she had assumed would be effectual with the Portingal, who, as we may remember, had seen her but once; for, occupied in giving orders for weighing anchor, and making sail, he took no notice whatever of his fair passenger, and seemed totally to have forgotten her person. But this was not the case: his attention had been first awakened to Lady Constance herself, by the sight of Dr. Wilbraham, whose face he instantly remembered; and a slight glance convinced him that the young nun was the bright lady he had seen in Sir Payan's halls.

Though there were few of the pleasant little passions which make a man a devil, that the worthy Portingal did not possess to repletion, it sometimes happened that one battled against the other, and foiled it in its efforts; but being withal somewhat of a philosopher, after a certain fashion, it was a part of his internal policy, on which he prided himself, to find means of gratifying each of the contending propensities, when it was possible; and when it was not possible, to satisfy the strongest with as little offence to the other as might be. In the present instance, he had several important points to consider; though he felt strongly inclined to carry Lady Constance with him on a voyage which he was about to make to the East Indies, yet there might be danger in the business, if the young lady had really taken the veil, not only danger in case of his vessel being searched by any cruizer he might encounter, but even danger

from his own lawless crew, who, though tolerably free from prejudices, still retained a certain superstitious respect for the Church of Rome, and for the things it had rendered sacred, which the worthy captain had never been able to do away with. This consideration would have deterred him from any evil attempt upon the fair girl, whom he otherwise seemed to hold completely in his power, had it not been for the additional incentive of the two large leathern bags, which had been committed into his charge at the same time with the young lady; and which, by the relation of their size to their weight, he conceived must contain a prize of some value. Determined by this, he gave orders for making all sail down the Channel, and the ship being fairly under weigh, he could resist no longer the temptation which the opportunity presented, of courting the good graces of his fair passenger. Approaching then with an air of, what he conceived, mingled dignity and sweetness, his head swinging backwards and forwards on the end of his long neck, and his infinite nose protruded like a pointer's, when he falls upon the game,—"Ah, ah! my very pretty gal," cried he "you see you be oblige to have recourse to me at last."

"My good friend," said Dr. Wilbraham, struggling with the demon of sea-sickness, which had grasped him by the stomach, and was almost squeezing his soul out, "you had better let the lady alone, for she is so sick she cannot attend to you, though doubtless you mean to be civil in your way."

"You go to the debil, master chaplain," replied the captain, "and preach to hims imps—I say, my very pretty mistress, suppose you were to pull up this dirty black veil, and show your charming face," and he drew aside the young lady's veil, in spite of her effort to hold it down.

At the helm, not far from where the young lady sat, stood a sturdy seaman, who by his clear blue eye, fresh weather-beaten countenance, and bluff unshrinking look, one might have easily marked out as an English sailor. Leaning on the tiller by which he was steering the vessel on her course, he had marked his worthy captain's conduct with a sort of contemplative frown, but when stooping down, the Portingallo tore away Lady Constance's veil, and amused himself by staring in her face, the honest sailor stretched out his foot, and touched him on a protuberant part of his person which presented itself behind. The captain, turning sharply round, eyed him like a demon, but the Englishman stood his glance with a look of steady nonchalant resolution, that was not easy to put down.

"I say, Portingallo," said he, "do you want me to heave you overboard?"

"You heave me overboard, you mutinous thief!" cried the captain; "I'll have you strung up to the yard-arm, you vaggle-boned, I will."

"You'll drown a little first, by the nose of the tinker of Ashford," replied the other; "but hark you, Portingallo, let the young Lady Nun alone; or, as I said before, by the nose of the tinker of Ashford, I'll heave you overboard; and then I'll make the crew a' ration, and tell them what a good service I've done 'em; and I'll lay down the matter in three heads; first, as you were a rascal; second, as you were a villain; and third, as you were a blackguard: then I will show how, first, you did wrong to a passenger; second, how you did wrong to a lady; and third, how you did wrong to a nun; for the first, you deserve to be flogged; for the second, you deserve to be kicked; and for the third you are devilish likely to be hanged, with time and God's blessing."

For a moment or two, the Portingallo was somewhat confounded by the eloquence of the Englishman, who was in fact no other than Timothy Bradford, the chief of the Rochester rioters: recovering himself speedily, however, he retaliated pretty warmly, yet did not dare to come to extremities with his rebellious steersman, as Bradford having taken refuge on board his vessel, with four or five of his principal associates, commanded too strong a party on board to permit very strict discipline. It was a general rule of the amiable captain, never to receive two men that, to his knowledge, had ever seen one another before; but several severe losses in his crew had, in the present instance, driven him into an error, which he now felt bitterly, not being half so much master of his own wickedness as he used to be before. Nevertheless, he did not fail to express his opinion of the helmsman's high qualities, in no very measured terms, threatening a great deal more than he dared perform, of which both parties were well aware.

"Come, come, Portingallo," cried the helmsman, "you know very well what is right as well as another, and I say you shan't molest the lady;—another thing, master, you treat that poor lubberly Jekin like a brute, and I'll not see it done, so look to it.—But I'll tell you what, captain, let us mind what we are about. These dark clouds that are gathering there to leeward, and coming up against the wind, mean something.—Better take in sail."

The effect of this conversation was to free Constance from the persecution of the captain; and turning her eyes in the direction to which the sailor pointed, she saw, rolling up in the

very face of the wind, some heavy leaden clouds, tipped with a lured reddish hue wherever they were touched by the sun. Above their heads, and to windward, the sky was clear and bright, obscured by nothing but an occasional light cloud, that flitted quickly over the heaven, drawing after it a soft shadow, that passed like an arrow over the gay waves, which all around were dancing joyously in the sunshine.

By this time, the English coast was becoming fainter and more faint; the long lines of cliffs and headlands massing together, covered with an airy and indistinct light, while the shores of France seemed growing out of the waters, with heavy piles of clouds towering above them, and seeming to advance with menacing mein, towards the rocks of England. Still, though the eye might mark them rolling one over another, in vast dense volumes, looking fit receptacles for the thunder and the storm, the clouds seemed to make but little progress, contending with the opposing wind, while mass after mass accumulating from behind, appeared to bring up new force to the dark front of the tempest.

Still the ship sped on, and the wind being full in her favour, made great way through the water, so that it was likely they would reach Boulogne before the storm began; and the captain, now obliged to abandon any evil purpose he might have conceived towards Lady Constance, steered towards the shores of France to get rid of her as soon as possible. From time to time, every eye on board was turned towards the lowering brow of heaven, and then always dropped to the French coast, to ascertain how near was the tempest, and how far the haven; and Constance, not sufficiently sick to be heedless of danger, ceased not to watch the approaching clouds and the growing shore, with alternate hope and fear. Gradually the hills towards Boulogne, the cliffs, and the sands, with dark lines of tower, and wall, and citadel, and steeple, began to grow more and more distinct, and the Portingal was making a tack to run into the harbour, when the vane at the mast-head began to quiver, and in a moment after turned suddenly round. Cries and confusion of every sort succeeded; one of the sails was completely rent to pieces, and the ship received such a sudden shock, that Constance was cast from her seat upon the deck, and poor Dr. Wilbraham rolled over, and almost pitched out at the other side. Soon, however, the yards were braced round, the vessel was put upon another tack, and from a few words that passed between the captain and the steersman, Constance

gathered, that as they could not get into Boulogne, they were about to run for Whitesand haven as the nearest port.

"Go down below, Lady, go down below, and tell your beads," cried the bluff steersman, as he saw Constance sitting and holding herself up by the binnacle. "Here, Jekey, help her down."

"Lord 'a mercy, we shall all be drowned, I am sure we shall," cried our old friend Jekin Groby, coming forward transformed into the likeness of a bastard sailor, his new profession sitting upon him with inconceivable awkwardness, and the Kentish clothier shining forth in every movement of his inexpert limbs. "Lord 'a mercy upon us, we shall all be drowned as sure as possible! Mistress Nun, let me help you down below--It's more comfortable to be drowned down stairs, they say—there's a flash of lightning, I declare! Mercy upon us! We shall all go to the bottom. This is the worst storm I've seen, since that Portingallo vagabond kiddapped me, by the help of the devil and Sir Payan Wileton—let me help you down below, Mrs. Nun—Lord bless you it's no trouble, I'm going down myself."

Constance, however, preferred staying upon deck, where she could watch the progress of their fate, to remaining below in a state of uncertainty, and consequently resisted the honest persuasions of good Jekin Groby, who, finding her immoveable, slipped quietly below unobserved, and hid himself in an empty hammock, courageously making up his mind to be drowned, if he could but be drowned asleep.

In the mean time, the storm began to grow more vehement, the wind coming in violent quick gusts, and the clouds spreading far and wide, over the face of the sky, with a threatening blackness of hue, and heavy slowness of flight, that menaced their instant descent. As yet, no second flash of lightning had succeeded the first, and no drop of rain had fallen; and though the ship laboured violently with the waves, excited into tumult by the sudden change of wind, still running on, she seemed in a fair way of reaching Whitesand in safety. Presently, another bright flash blazed through the sky, and seemed to rend it from the horizon to the zenith, while instant upon the red path of its fiery messenger, roared forth the voice of the thunder, as if it would annihilate the globe. Another now succeeded and another, till the ear and the eye were almost deafened by the din, and blinded by the light; while slow, large drops came dripping from the heaven, like tears wrung by agony from a giant's eyes. Then came a still and death-like pause—

the thunder ceased, the wind hushed, and the only sounds that met the ear were the rushing of the waves by the ship's side, and the pattering of each big raindrop as it fell on the deck; while a small sea-bird kept wheeling round the vessel, and screaming, as with a sort of fiendish joy, to see it labouring with the angry billows. Soon again, however, did the storm begin with redoubled fury, and the lightnings flashed more vividly than ever, covering all the sky with broad blue sheets of light, while still in the midst of the whole blaze appeared a narrow zigzag line of fire, so bright that it made the rest look pale.

Still Constance kept upon the deck, and drawing her hood over her head, strove to fix herself amid the pitching of the vessel, by clinging to the binnacle, which in ships of that day was often supported by a couple of oblique bars. Seeing in the momentary cessation of the storm, the eye of the steersman fix upon her with a look of somewhat like pity, she ventured to ask if they were in much danger.

"Danger! bless you, no, lady," cried the man; "only a little thunder and lightning; no danger in life.—But you had better go below,—there's no danger—"

As he spoke, another bright flash caused Constance to close her eyes, but a tremendous crash, which made itself audible even through the roar of the thunder, as well as a heavy roll of the vessel, gave her notice that the lightning had struck somewhere: and looking up, to her horror, she beheld the mainmast shivered almost to atoms by the lightning, and rolled over the ship's side, to which it was still attached by a mass of blazing cordage.

"Cut! cut! cut!" vociferated the steersman, amid the unavailing shouts and bustling inactivity of the crew; "cut! you Portingallo vagabonds! You'll have the ship on fire. The idiots are staring, as if they never saw such a thing before. Here, captain, take the helm. D—— you to h——, take the helm!" And springing forward, with an energy to which the danger of the moment seemed to lend additional impulse, he scattered the frightened Portuguese and impassible Dutchmen, who were unclueing ropes and disentangling knots, and catching up a hatchet, soon cut sheer through the thicker rigging; and with a roll the blazing remnants of the mast pitched into the sea, leaving nothing on fire behind, but some scattered cordage, which the Englishman and his companions gradually extinguished.

In the meanwhile, the mast still flaming in the water swung

round the ship, and the Portingallo, whose presence of mind did not seem of the very first quality, brought the vessel's head as near the wind as possible, to let it drift astern, and thus, by this lubberly action, bore right upon the shore, carried on imperceptibly by a strong currrent.

At that moment the Englishman raised himself, and looking out before, vociferated, "a reef, a reef! Breakers a-head! Down with the helm! where the devil are you going?—Down with the helm, I say!" and rushing forward, he seized the tiller, but too late! Scarcely had he touched it with his hand, when with a tremendous shock the ship struck on the reef, making its very seams open, and its masts stagger. "Ho! down in the hold! down in the hold! heave all the ballast aft," cried Bradford; "lay those cannon here—bring her head to wind, let it take her back if it will.—She may swing off yet."

But just then an immense swelling wave heaved the ship up like a cork, and dashed her down again upon the hidden rocks, without hope or resource. Every one caught at what was next them for support; for the jar was so great, that it was hardly possible for even the sailors to keep upon their feet. But the next minute she became more steady, and a harsh grating sound succeeded, as if the hard angles of the rock were tearing the bottom of the ship to pieces. Every one now occupied himself in a different way. Bradford sat quietly down by the tiller, which he abandoned to its own guidance, while the Portingal ran whispering among his countrymen, who as speedily and silently as possible got the boat to the ship's side. In the meanwhile, Dr. Wilbraham crept over to Lady Constance, who, turning her meek eyes to heaven, seemed to await her fate with patient resignation.

"I need not ask you, my dear child," said the good man, "if you be prepared to go. Have you any thing to say to me, before we part? soon, I hope, to meet again where no storms come."

"But little," answered Constance; and according to the rite of her church, she whispered all the little faults that memory could supply, accusing herself of many things as sins, which few but herself would have held as even errors. When he had heard the lady's confession, the clergyman turned to look for the waiting-woman to join her with her mistress in the consolations of religion; but Mrs. Margaret, who greatly preferred the present to the future, was no longer there; and looking forward, they beheld, that the Portuguese and Dutch had got out the boats, and were pouring in fast; but that which most asto-

nished them was to find, that the selfish waiting-woman had by some means got the very first place in the long-boat, from which the captain was striving to exclude two of the Englishmen, pushing off from the ship with the boat-hook. The lesser boat, however, was still near, and Dr. Wilbraham looked at Constance with an inquiring glance; but Bradford, who had never stirred from his position, interposed, saying, "Don't go, lady—don't go! stick to the ship, she can't sink, for the tide is near flood, and we are now aground, and it may be a while before she goes to pieces.—Those boats can never live through that surf. So don't go, lady, take my advice—and I'll manage to save you yet, if I can save myself."

Even as he spoke, the two Englishmen made a desperate jump to leap into the lesser boat, which was pulling away after the other. One man fell too short, and sunk instantly; the other got hold of the gunwale, and strove to clamber in, but the boat was already too full, and a sea striking it at the moment, his weight put it out of trim, it shipped a heavy sea, settled for a moment, and sunk before their eyes.

It was a dreadful sight; and yet so deep, so exciting was the interest, that even after she had seen the whole ten persons sink, and some rise again, only to be overwhelmed by another wave, Constance could not take her eyes off the other boat, although she expected every moment to see it share the fate of its companion. Still, however, it rowed on.—The thunder had ceased, the wind was calmer, and the waves seemed less agitated.—There was hope that it might reach the shore. At that moment it was hidden for an instant below a wave,—rose again—entered the surf—disappeared amid the foam and spray—Constance looked to see it rise again, but it never was seen more, and in a few minutes she could distinguish a dark figure scramble out from the sea upon the shore, rise, fall again, lie for a moment as if exhausted, and then once more gaining its feet, run with all speed out of the way of the coming waves.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" cried a dolorous voice from below. "We shall all be drowned for a sure certainty—the water's a coming in like mad," and in a moment after, the head, and then the body, of honest Jekin Groby protruded itself from the hold, with strong signs and tokens, in his large thick eyelids, of having just woke from a profound sleep. "Lord 'a mercy!" continued he, seeing the nearly empty deck. "Where are all the folks? Oh, Master Bradford, Master Bradford, we are in a bad way! The water has just woke me out of my sleep.—

What's the meaning of that thumping. Lord 'a mercy! where's the Portingal ?"

"Drowned!" answered Bradford, calmly, "and every one of his crew, except Hinchin, the strong swimmer, who has got to land."

"Lord 'a mercy, only think!" cried Jekin. "Must I be drowned too? Hadn't I better jump over? I can swim a little too.—Shall I jump over, Master Bradford? Pray tell me, there's a good creature."

"No, no, stay where you are," replied Bradford. "Help me to lash this young lady to a spar. When the tide turns, which it will at four o'clock, that surf will go down, and the ship will keep together till then. Most likely Hinchin will send a boat before that to take us all off. If not, we can but trust to the water at last. However, let us be all ready."

Bradford now brought forth from the hold some rough planks, to one of which he lashed Lady Constance, who yielded herself to his guidance, only praying that he would do the same good turn to the clergyman, which he promised willingly. He then tied a small piece of wood across, to support her head, and fastened one of the heavy leathern bags to her feet, to raise her face above the water; after which, as she was totally unable to move, he placed her in as easy a position as he could, and speaking a few frank words of comfort and assurance, he left her to perform the same office in favour of Dr. Wilbraham.

In the mean time, Jekin Groby had not forgotten himself, but willing to put his faith rather in the buoyancy of deal boards, than in his own powers of natation, had contrived to find a stout sort of packing-case, or wooden box, from which he knocked out both top and bottom, and passing his feet through the rest, he raised it up till it reached his arm-pits, where he tied it securely; and thus equipped in his wooden girdle, as he called it, he did not fear to trust himself to the waves.

All being now prepared, an hour or more of anxious expectation succeeded. Little was said by any one, and the tempest had ceased; but the grinding sound of the ship, fretting upon the rock, still continued, and a sad creaking and groaning of the two masts that remained, seemed to announce their speedy fall. The wind had greatly subsided, but the air was heated and close, while the clouds overhead, still agitated by the past storm, every now and then came down in thick small rain. Towards four o'clock the tide turned, and, as

Bradford had prognosticated, the surf upon the shore gradually subsided, and the sea became more smooth, though yet agitated by a heavy swell, foaming into breakers along the whole line of reef on which the ship had struck. After looking out long, in the vain hope of seeing some boat coming to their assistance, Bradford approached Lady Constance, and addressing her, as indeed he had done throughout, with far more gentleness and consideration, than might have been expected from a man of his rough and turbulent character, "Lady," said he, "there seems to be no chance of a boat; the sea is now nearly smooth; I can't warrant that the ship will hold together all night, and we may have the storm back again. If you like to go now, I will get you safe to land, I am sure. I can't answer for it if you stay."

"I will do as you think right," said Lady Constance, with an involuntary shudder at the thought of trusting herself to the mercy of the waves. "I will do as you think right; but pray take care of Dr. Wilbraham."

"No, no!" said the good chaplain, "make the lady all your care.—I shall do well enough."

"Here, good fellow," said Constance, taking a diamond of price from her finger; "perhaps you may reach the shore without either of us; however, whether you do or not, take this jewel, as some recompense for your good service."

The man took the ring, muttering that if he reached the shore, she should reach it too; and then, after giving some directions to Dr. Wilbraham in regard to rowing himself on towards the land, with his arms, which were free, he carried Lady Constance to the side of the vessel, that had now heeled almost to the water's edge. Returning for Dr. Wilbraham, with the assistance of Jekin he brought him also to the side; and then it became the question who should be the first to trust himself to the waves. Constance trembled violently, but said not a word, while Jekin Groby, holding back, exclaimed, "Lord a' mercy! I don't like it—at all like."

It was upon him, however, that Bradford fixed, crying, "Come, jump over, Jekey; there's no use of making mouths at it. I want you to help the clerk to steer—come, jump over!" and he laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Well, well—I will, Master Bradford," cried Jekin, "don't ye touch me, and I will.—Oh dear, oh dear! it's mighty disagreeable—well, well, I will!" and bending his hams, he made as if he would have taken a vigorous leap; but his courage failed him, and he only made a sort of a hop of a few inches

on the deck, without approaching any nearer to the water. Out of patience, Bradford caught him by the shoulder, and pushed him at once head-foremost into the water, from which he rose in a moment, all panting, buoyed up by the wooden case under his arms.

"Here, Jekey," cried Bradford, "take the Doctor's feet, as your arms are free;" and with the assistance of the worthy clothier, who bore no malice, he let down Dr. Wilbraham into the water, and returned to the lady.

As pale as death, Constance shut her eyes, and held her breath, while the rough sailor took her in his arms, and let her glide slowly into the water, which in a moment after she felt dashing round her uncontrolled. Opening her eyes, and panting for breath, she stretched out her arms, almost deprived of consciousness; but at that moment, Bradford jumped at once into the sea, and catching the board to which she was tied, put it in its right position, so that, though many a domineering wave would rise above its fellows, and dash its salt foam over her head, her mouth was generally elevated above the water sufficiently to allow her full room to breathe.

The distance of the ship from the land was about a quarter of a mile; but between it and the shore lay a variety of broken rocks, raising their rough heads above the waves, that dashed furiously among them, making a thousand struggling whirlpools and eddies round their sharp angles, as the retiring sea withdrew his unwilling waters from the strand. Constance, however, did not see all this, for her face being turned towards the sky, nothing met her sight but the changeable face of heaven, with the clouds hurrying over it, or the green billows on either side, threatening every moment to overwhelm her. Often, often did her heart sink, and hard was it for the spirit of a timid girl, even supported by her firm trust in God's mercy, to keep the spark of hope alive within her bosom, while looking on the perils that surrounded her, and fancying a thousand that she did not behold.

Still the stout seaman swam beside her, piloting the little sort of raft he had made for her towards the shore, through all the difficulties of the navigation, which were not few or small; for the struggle between the retiring tide, and the impetus given by the wind, rendered almost every passage between the rocks, a miniature Sylla and Charybdis.

At length, however, choosing a moment when the waves flowed fully in between two large rough stones, whose heads protruded most perpendicularly, he grasped the plank to which

Constance was tied, with his left hand, and striking a few vigorous strokes with his right, soon placed her within the rocky screen, with which the coast was fenced, and within whose boundary the water was comparatively calm. The first object that presented itself to his sight, within this haven, was the long-boat, keel upwards; while, tossed by the waves upon one of the large flat stones that the ebbing tide had left half bare, appeared the corpse of the Portingal Captain, his feet and body on the rock, and his head dropping back, half covered by the water. In a minute after, the sailor's feet could touch the ground; and gladly availing himself of the power to walk upon terra firma, he waded on, drawing the plank, on which Constance lay, after him, till reaching the dry land, he pulled her to the shore, cut the cord that tied her, and placed her on her feet.

Constance's first impulse was to throw herself on her knees, and to thank God for his great mercy; her next to express her gratitude to the honest sailor, who, weary and out of breath with exertion, sat on a rock hard by; but bewildered with all that had passed, she could scarcely find words to speak, feeling herself in a world that seemed hardly her own, so far had she been on the brink of another. After a few confused sentences, she looked suddenly round, exclaiming, "Oh, where is Dr. Wilbraham?"

The sailor started up, and getting on the rock, looked out beyond, where about two hundred yards off, he perceived honest Jekin Groby, making his way towards the shore in one direction, while the plank to which the amiable clergyman was attached, was seen approaching the rocks in another, at a point where the waters were boiling with tenfold violence.

Constance's eye had already caught his long black habiliments, mingled with the white foam of the waves, and seeing that every fresh billow threatened to dash him to pieces against the stones, she clasped her hands in agony, and looked imploringly towards the sailor.

"He will have his brains dashed out, sure enough," said the man, watching him. "Zounds! he must be mad to try that —stay here, lady, I will see what can be done;" and rushing into the water, he waded as far as he could towards Dr. Wilbraham, and then once more began swimming.

Constance watched him with agonizing expectation, but before he reached the point, an angry wave swept round the good old man, and raising him high upon its top, dashed him violently against the rock. Constance shuddered, and clasping

hands over her eyes, strove to shut out the dreadful sight. a few minutes she heard the voice of the sailor shouting to kin Groby, who had reached the shore, "Here lend a hand!" and looking up she saw him drawing the clergyman to land, in the same manner that he had extricated herself.

Jekin Groby waded in to help him, and Constance flew to the spot which he approached; but the sight that presented itself made her blood run cold: Dr. Wilbraham was living indeed, but so dreadfully torn and bruised by beating against the rocks, that all hope seemed vain, and those who best loved him, might have regretted that he had not met with a speedier and more easy death.

Opening his exhausted eyes, he yet looked gladly upon the sweet girl that he had reared, like a young flower, from her early days to her full beauty, and who now hung tenderly over him. "Thank God, my dear child!" said he, "that you are safe—that is the first thing: for me, I am badly hurt, very badly hurt—but perhaps I may yet live—I could wish it, to see you happy—but if not, God's will be done!"

Constance wept bitterly, and good Jekin Groby, infected with her sorrow, blubbered like a great baby.

"There leave off snivelling, you great fool," cried Bradford, wiping something like a tear from his own rough cheek, "and help me to carry the good gentleman to some cottage." Thus saying, with the assistance of Jekin he raised the old man, and followed by Constance, bore him on in search of an asylum.

CHAPTER XV.

"Thou seest me much distempered in my mind."
DRYDEN.

We have many reasons to believe, that men whose mental energies are of that rare quality which, for a time, seems to conquer fate and circumstances, and whether employed in good or evil deeds, to triumph over the common stumbling-blocks of their ordinary fellows—We have many reasons to believe, that such men, at the period when their prosperity was reaching their foredoomed conclusion, are blessed or

cursed, as it may be, with an intimation of their approaching end, and for the time lose that confident fearlessness which formerly bore them on to success.

Sir Payan Wileton had gone through life with fearless daring; calculating, but never hesitating; keensighted of danger, but never timid. From youth he had divested himself of the three great fears which generally affect mankind,—the fear of the world's opinion, the fear of his own conscience, and the fear of death, and thus endued with much bad courage, he had attempted and succeeded in many things which would have frightened a timid man, and failed with an irresolute one. And yet, as we have seen, by one of those strange contradictions of which human nature is full, Sir Payan, though an unbeliever in the bright truths of religion, was credulous to many of the darkest superstitions of the age in which he lived.

On such a mind, any thing that smacked of supernatural presentiment, was likely to take the firmest hold; and, on the morning after Lady Constance had, by his means and by his instigation, effected her flight from Richmond, he rose early from a troubled sleep, overshadowed by a deep despondency, which had never till then hung upon him. Before he was yet dressed, the news was brought him that one of his men had returned with the boat, and that the other had been arrested in the king's name. He felt that his fortune had passed away—an internal voice seemed to tell him that it was at an end; but yet he omitted no measures of security, quitting the capital without loss of time, and leaving such instructions with the porter as he deemed most likely to blind the eyes of Wolsey; hoping that the servant, whose life was in his power, would not betray him, yet prepared if he did, boldly to repel the charge, and by producing evidence to invalidate the other's testimony, to cast the accusation back upon his head.

But still, from that moment Sir Payan was an altered being; and though many days passed by without any thing occurring to disturb his repose; though the king's progress towards Dover, without any notice having been taken of his participation in Lady Constance's escape, led him to believe that fear had kept the servant faithful, yet still Sir Payan remained in a state of gloom and lassitude, that raised many a marvel among those around him.

Wandering through the woods that surrounded his mansion, he passed hours and hours in deep, inactive, bitter meditation; finding no consolation in his own heart, no hope in the future, and no repose in the past; and, why he knew not, despairing,

where he had never despaired, trembling where he had never known fear.

Often he questioned himself upon the strange depression of his mind; and the more he did so, the more he became convinced that it was a supernatural warning of approaching fate. Many were the resolutions that he made to shake it off, to struggle still, to seek the court, and urge his claim on the estates of Constance de Grey, as he would have done in former days; but in vain; a leaden power lay heavy upon his heart, and crushed all its usual energies; and the only effort he could make, was to send out servants in every direction, to seek Sir Cesar, the astrologer; weakly hoping to brace up his relaxed confidence by some predictions of success. But the old man was not easily to be found. No one knew his abode, and ever strange and erratic in his motions, he seemed now agitated by some extraordinary impulse, so that even when they had once found his track, the servants of Sir Payan had often to trace him to ten or twelve houses in the course of a day. Sometimes it was in the manor of a Peer, sometimes in the cottage of the peasant, that they heard of him; but in none did he seem to sojourn for above an hour, hurrying on wildly to the dwelling of some other, among the many that he knew in all classes.

At length they overtook him in the road near Sandgate, and delivered Sir Payan's message; whereupon, without any reply, he turned his horse, and rode towards Chilham, where he arrived in the evening. Springing to the ground without any appearance of fatigue, the old man sought Sir Payan in the park, to which the servants said he had retired; and winding through the various long alleys, found him at length walking backwards and forwards, with his arms crossed on his bosom, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. The evening sunshine was streaming brightly upon the spot, pouring a mellow misty light through the western trees, on the tall dark figure of Sir Payan; who, bending down his head, paced along with gloomy slowness, like some bad spirit, oppressed and tormented by the very smile of heaven.

It was a strange sight to see his meeting with Sir Cesar; both were pale and haggard; for some cause only known to himself, had worn the keen features of the astrologer, till the bones and cartilages seemed starting through the skin; and Sir Payan's ashy cheek had lately acquired a still more deadly hue than it usually bore: both too looked wild and fearful; the keen black eyes of the old man showing with a terrific bright-

ness, in his thin and livid face, and the stern features of Sir Payan appearing full of a sort of ferocious light, which his attendants had remarked, ever since he had been overthrown in the tilt by the lance of Sir Osborne. Meeting thus, in the full yellow sunshine, while Sir Cesar fixed his usual intense and scrutinizing glance upon the countenance of the other, and Sir Payan strove to receive him with a smile, that but mocked the lips it shone upon; they looked like two beings of another world, met for the first time in upper air, to commune of things long passed.

"Well, unhappy man," said Sir Cesar at length, "what with me?"

"That I am unhappy," replied Sir Payan, knitting his brow, as he saw that little consolation was to be expected from the astrologer, "I do not deny; and it is to know why I am unhappy, that I have asked you to come hither."

"You are unhappy," answered Sir Cesar, "because you have plundered the widow and the orphan, because you have wronged the friendless and the weak, because you have betrayed the confident and the generous.—You are unhappy, because there is not one in the wide world that loves you, and because you even despise, and hate, and reprobate yourself."

"Old man! old man!" cried Sir Payan, half unsheathing his dagger, "beware, beware. Those men," he added, pushing back the weapon into its sheath, "ought only to be unhappy that are unsuccessful,—the rest is all a bugbear, set up by the weak to frighten away the strong. But I have been successful,—am successful. Why then am I unhappy?"

"Because your success is at an end," replied the astrologer; "because you tremble on your fall,—because your days are numbered, and late remorse is gnawing your heart in spite of your vain-boasting. Nay, lay not your hand upon the hilt of your dagger! Over me, murderer! you have no power. That dagger took the life of one that had never wronged you. Remember the route at Taunton—remember the youth, murdered the night after he surrendered!"—Sir Payan trembled like an aspen leaf while the old man spoke,—"Yes, murderer!" continued Sir Cesar, "though you thought the deed hid in the bowels of the earth, I know it all. That hand slew all that was dearest to me on earth!—the child that unhappy fortune forced me to leave upon this cursed shore; and long, long age should his fate have been avenged in your blood, had not I seen—had not I known that Heaven willed it otherwise. I have waited patiently for the hour, that is now come—I have

broken your bread, and I have drank of your wine; but while I did so, I have seen you gathering curses on your head, and accumulating sins to sink you to perdition, and that has taught me to endure. I would not have saved you one hour of crime—I would not have robbed my revenge of one single sin—no, not for an empire! But I have watched you; go on, gloriously, triumphantly, in evil and in wickedness, till heaven can bear no more—till you have eaten up your future, and soon, with all your crimes upon your head, hated, despised, condemned by all mankind, your black soul shall be parted from your body, and my eyes shall see you die."

Sir Payan had listened with varied emotions as the old man spoke. Surprise, remorse, and fear had been the first; but gradually, the more tempestuous feelings of his nature hurried away the rest, and rage gaining mastery of all, he drew his poniard, and sprang upon Sir Cesar. But in the very act, as his arm was raised to strike, he was caught by two powerful men, who threw him back upon the ground, and disarmed him; one of them exclaiming, "Ho, ho! we have just come in time.—Sir Payan Wileton, you are attached in the King's name —Lo, here is the warrant for your apprehension.—You must come with us, Sir, to Calais."

One would attempt in vain to describe the rage that convulsed the form of Sir Payan Wileton, more especially when he beheld Sir Cesar smile upon him with a look of triumphant satisfaction. "Seize him!" exclaimed he, with furious violence, pointing to the astrologer; "seize him! if you love your King and your country. He is a marked and obnoxious traitor. I impeach him, and you do not your duty if you let him escape; or are you his confederates, and come up to prevent my punishing him for the treasons he has just acknowledged?"

"Sir Payan Wileton," replied the sergeant-at-arms, "this passion is all in vain. I am sent here with a warrant from the King's privy council, to attach you for high-treason; but I have no authority to arrest any one else."

"But I am a magistrate," cried the baffled Knight; "let him not escape, I enjoin you, till I have time to commit him. He is a traitor, I say, and if you seize him not, you are the King's enemies."

"Attached for high-treason, Sir, you are no longer a magistrate," replied the sergeant. "At all events, I do not hold myself justified in apprehending any body against whom I have no warrant, especially when I found you raising your hand

illegally against the person's life whom you now accuse. I can take no heed of the matter—you must come with me."

"He shall be satisfied!" said Sir Cesar. "Venomless serpent! I will follow thee now till thy last hour. But think not that thou canst hurt me, for thy power has gone from thee; and though wicked as a demon, thou art weak as a child.—I know that my days are numbered as well as thine.—I know that we are doomed to pass the same gate; but not to journey on the same road. Lead on, sergeant, I will journey on with you; and then if this bad man have ought to urge against me, let him do it."

"Go, if you will, Sir," replied the officer; "but remember, you act according to your own pleasure—I make no arrest in your case—you are free to come with us or to stay, as you think fit."

Sir Payan was now led back to the house, which was in possession of the King's archers; and as he passed through his own hall, with a burning heart, the hasty glance that he cast around among his servants, showed him at once, that though there were none to pity or befriend, there were many full ready to betray;—then rushed upon his mind, the many accusations that they might pile upon his head, now that they saw him sinking below the stream.—The certainty of death—the dread of something after death—doubts of his own scepticism—the innate, all-powerful conviction of a future state—a state growing dreadfully perceptible to his eye as he approached the brink of that yawning gulf, which his own acts had peopled with strange fears. All that he had scoffed at, all that he had despised, now assumed a new and fearful character—even the world's opinion—the world's contemned opinion, came across his thought—that there was not one heart on all the earth would mourn his end; that hatred and abhorrence would go with him to the grave, and that his memory would only live with infamy in the records of crime and punishment. Burying his face in his hands, he sat in deep, despairing, agonizing silence, while his horse was being prepared, and while the officer put his seal upon the various doors which he thought it necessary to secure.

To the questions of whether he needed any refreshment, or required any thing but the clothes which had been prepared, before he quitted the house, he replied nothing, but with glaring eyes waved his hand, signifying that he was ready to proceed.

A few hours brought the whole party to Dover, and the next

day saw their arrival at Calais; but, by that time, the Court had removed to Guisnes, and the sergeant having no orders to bring his prisoner farther, sent forward a messenger to announce his arrival, and demand instructions.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Once more the fleeting soul came back,
T' inspire the mortal frame,
And in the body took a doubtful stand,
Hovering like expiring flame
That mounts and falls by turns."

DRYDEN.

THE painful situation of Lady Constance de Grey had not lost any portion of its sorrow, or gained any ray of hope on the first of June, three days after we last left her, at which period we again take her story up She was then sitting in a small, poor cottage between Whitesand Bay and Boulogne, watching the slumber of the excellent old man whose regard for her had brought upon his head so much pain and danger. Ever since he had been removed to the hut where they now were, he had lingered in great agony, except at those times when a state of stupor fell upon him, under which he would remain for many hours, and only wake from it again to acute pain. He had, however, that morning, fulfilled the last duties of his religion, with the assistance of a good monk of Boulogne, who sat with Lady Constance, watching the sweet sleep into which he had fallen, for the first time since their shipwreck.

Across the little window, to keep out the light, Constance had drawn one of her own dresses, which had been saved by the sailor; Bradford having tied the leathern case that contained them, to the plank which had brought herself to shore; but still through the casement, notwithstanding this sort of extemporaneous curtain, the soft breath of the early morning flowed in; and the murmuring voice of the treacherous ocean was heard softly from afar, filling up every pause in the singing of the birds, and the busy hum of all the light children of the summer.

The calmness of the old man's slumber gave Constance hope; and, with a sweet smile, she sat beside him listening to

the mingled voice of creation, and joining mentally in the song of praise, that all things seemed raising towards the great Creator. Indeed, if ever mortal being might be supposed to resemble those pure spirits, who, freed from all touch of clay, adore the Almighty in his works, she then looked like an angel, in form, in feature, and in expression, while robed all in white, and watching the sick bed of her ancient friend, she looked upon his tranquil slumber, with that bland smile of hope and gratitude.

In the mean while, the old monk sat on the other side of his bed, regarding him with more anxiety; for long experience, in visiting those who hung upon the brink of another world, had taught him, that sleep like that into which the clergyman had fallen, as often preceded death as recovery. It had continued thus till towards midday, the cottage being left in solitude and silence, for the sailor, Bradford, had gone to seek remedies from a simpler at Boulogne; and Jekin Groby had stolen away for a visit to Calais, while the people to whom the cottage belonged, were absent upon their daily occupations. At length, however, a slight sort of convulsive motion passed over the features of the old man, and opening his eyes, he said, in a faint low voice, "Constance, my dear child, where are you? My eyes are dim."

"I am here, my dear Sir," replied Constance. "You have been sleeping very sweetly. I hope you feel better."

"It is over, Constance!" replied Dr. Wilbraham, calmly but feebly. "I am dying, my child. Let me see the sunshine." Constance withdrew the curtain, and the fresh air blowing on the sick man's face seemed to give him more strength. "It is bright," cried he, "it is very bright. I feel the sweet summer air, and I hear the glad singing of the birds; but I go fast, dear daughter, where there are things brighter and sweeter,—for surely, surely, God who has clothed this world with such splendour, has reserved far greater for the world to come."

The tears streamed down Constance's cheeks, for there was in the old man's face a look of death not to be mistaken—that look the inevitable precursor of dissolution to man, when it seems as if the avenging angel had come between him and the sun of being, and cast his dark shadow over him for ever.

"Weep not, Constance," said the old man, with faint and broken efforts, "for no storms will reach me in my Redeemer's bosom.—In his mercy is my hope, in his salvation is my reliance. Soon, soon shall I be in the place of peace where joy

reigneth eternally.—Could I have a fear, my dear child, it would be for you, left alone in a wide and desolate world, with none to protect you.—But no, I have no fear! God is your protector! and never, never, my child, doubt his goodness, nor think that he does not as surely watch over the universe, as he created it at first. Every thing is beneath his eye, from the smallest grain of sand to the great globe itself. and his will governs all, and guides all, though we neither see the beginning nor the end.—Constance, I am departing," he continued, more faintly—"God's blessing be upon you, my child! and oh! if He in his wisdom ever permits the spirit of the dead to watch over those they loved when living, I will be with you and Darnley—when this frail body—is dust."

His lips began gradually to lose their power of utterance, and his head fell back upon the pillow. The monk saw that the good man's end was approaching fast, and placing the crucifix in his dying hand, he poured the words of consolation in his ear, but Dr. Wilbraham slightly motioned with his hand, to signify that he was quite prepared, and fixing his eyes upon the cross, murmured to himself, "I come, oh Lord, I come! Be thou merciful unto me, oh King of mercy! Deliver speedily from the power of death, oh Lord of life!"

The sounds gradually ceased, but yet his lips continued to move—his lips lost their motion; but still his eyes fixed full of hope upon the cross—a film came over them—it passed away, and the light beamed up again—shone brightly for a moment—waned—vanished—and all was death. The eyes were still fixed upon the cross, but that bright thing, life, was there no more.—To look at them, no one could say what was gone between that minute and the one before; and yet it was evident, that they were now but dust—the light was extinguished, the wine was poured out, and it was but the broken lamp, the empty urn, that remained to go down into the tomb.

Constance closed his eyes, and weeping bitterly, kneeled down with the old monk, and joined in the prayer that he addressed to heaven. She then rose, and seated herself by all that remained of her dead friend, feeling alone in all the world, solitary, friendless, desolate; and straining her sweet eyes upon the cold unresponsive countenance of the dead, she seemed bitterly to drink to the dregs, the cup of hopelessness which that sight offered.

No one spake,—the monk too was silent, seeming to think that the prayer he had offered to the Deity was the only fitting language for the presence of the dead, when a sound was heard *without*, and the door gently opening admitted the form of

Jekin Groby. The good clothier thought the old man still slept, as when he had left the cottage, and advanced on tiptoe for fear of waking him; but the lifted hand of the monk, the streaming eyes of Constance, and the cold rigid stiffness of the face before him, warned him of what had happened; and pausing suddenly, he clasped his hands with a look of unaffected sorrow. "Good God!" cried he, "he is dead! Alas the day!" —Constance's tears streamed afresh—"Lady," said the worthy man, in a kindly tone, "take comfort! He is gone to a better place than we have here, poor hapless souls! And surely, if all were as well fitted for that place as he was, we should have little cause to fear our death, and our gossips little cause to weep. Take comfort, sweet lady! take comfort! Our God is too good, for us to murmur when he cuts our measure short."

There was something in the homely consolation of the honest Englishman, that touched Constance to the heart, and yet she could not refrain from weeping even more than before.

"Nay, nay, dear lady," continued Jekin, affected almost to tears himself, "you must come away from here; I cannot bear to see you weep so; and though I am but a poor clothier, and little fitted to put myself in his place that is gone, I will never leave you till I see you safe. Indeed I won't! Come, lady, into the other cottage hard by, and we will send some one to watch here in your place. Lord, Lord! to think how soon a fellow-creature is gone! Sure I thought to find him better when I came back.—Come, lady, come."

"Perhaps I had better," replied Constance, drying her tears. "My cares for him now are useless; yet, though I murmur not at God's will, I must e'en weep, for I have lost as good a friend, and the world has lost as good a man, as ever it possessed. But I will go; for it is in vain to stay here and encourage unavailing grief." She then addressed a few sentences to the monk in French, thanking him for his charitable offices towards her dead friend, and begging him to remain there till she could send some one to watch the body, adding, that if he would come after that, to the adjoining cottage, she would beg him to convey to his convent a small gift on her part.

The monk bowed his head, and promised to obey; and Constance, giving one last look to the inanimate form of the excellent being she had just lost, followed Jekin Groby to the cottage hard by, where, begging to be left alone, she once more burst into tears, and let both her sorrow and despondency have way, feeling that sort of oppression at her heart, which can but be relieved by weeping.

It is needless to follow farther such sad scenes, to tell the blunt grief of Bradford, when he returned and found that his errand had been in vain; or to describe the funeral of good Dr. Wilbraham, which took place the next day (for so custom required) in the little cemetery of Whitesand Bay.

Immediately this was over, Lady Constance prepared to set out for Boulogne, hoping to find a refuge in the heart of France, till she had time to consider and execute some plan for her future conduct. We have twice said, that the sailor, in tying her to the plank on which she had floated from the shipwrecked vessel, had fastened to the end of the board nearest her feet, one of her own leathern cases, for the purpose of keeping her head raised above the water; and in this, as it luckily happened, were all the jewels, and the money which she had brought with her from London.

It would doubtless have rendered her situation much more critical and interesting, if she had been deprived of all such resource; but as the fact was so, it was necessary to state it. No difficulty therefore seemed likely to present itself in her journey to her own estates, except that which might arise, in procuring a litter to convey her on her way; or in meeting with some female attendant, willing to accompany her. The latter of these was soon done away with, for the daughter of the cottagers where she had lodged, a gay, good humoured Picarde, gladly undertook the post of waiting-woman to the sweet lady; whose gentleness had won them all, and Bradford, who, from a soldier, a sailor, a shipwright, and a Rochester rioter, had now become a squire of dames, was despatched to Boulogne, to see if he could buy or hire a litter and horses.

In the midst of all these proceedings, poor Jekin Groby was sadly agitated by many contending feelings. In his first fit of sympathy with Constance, on the death of Dr. Wilbraham, he had, as we have seen, promised to accompany her to the end of her journey, whithersoever it might be; but the thoughts of dear little England, and his own fire-side, and his bales of cloth, and his bags of angels, called him vehemently across the Channel, while curiosity, with a certain touch of mercantile calculation, pulled him strongly towards the court at Calais. Notwithstanding he resolved, above all things, to act handsomely, as he said towards the lady; and accordingly he accompanied Bradford to Boulogne, to ascertain if he could by any way get 'off trudging after her the Lord knows where, as he expressed it, though he vowed he was very willing to go, if he could be of any service.

After the sailor and his companion had been absent about six hours, Constance began to be impatient, and proceeded to the door of the cottage to see if she could perceive them coming. Gazing for a few minutes on the road to Boulogne, she beheld, rising above the brow of the hill before her, a knight's pennon, and presently half a dozen spears appeared bristling up behind it. Judging that it was some accidental party proceeding towards Whitesand Bay, Constance retired into the cottage, and was not a little surprised when she heard the horses halt before the door. In a moment after, a gallant cavalier, in peaceful guise, armed only with his sword and dagger, entered the hut, and, doffing his plumed *mortier* to the lady, with a low inclination of the head, he advanced towards her, saying in French, "Have I the honour of speaking to the noble Lady de Grey, Countess of Boissy and the Val de Marne?"

"The same, Sir Knight," replied the Lady. "To what, may I ask, do I owe the honour of your presence?"

"His Highness, Francis King of France, now in the city of Boulogne," replied the Knight, "hearing that a lady, and his vassal, though born an English subject, had been shipwrecked on this shore, has chosen me for the pleasing task of inviting, in his name, the Countess de Boissy, to repair to his royal court, not as a sovereign commanding the homage of his vassal, but as a gracious and a noble friend, offering service and good-will. His highness' sister also, the Princess Marguerite of Alençon, has sent her own litter for your convenience, with such escort as may suit your quality."

Constance could only express her thanks. Had she possessed the power of choice, she would of course have preferred a thousand times to have retired to the Val de Marne, without her coming being known to the French King, or his court, till such time, at least, as the meeting between him and the King of England had taken place. However, as it was known, she could not refuse to obey, and she signified her readiness to accompany the French Knight, begging him merely to wait till the return of a person she had sent to Boulogne for a litter.

"He will not return, Lady," replied the Chevalier; "it was through his search for a litter at Boulogne, where none are to be had, all being bought for the Court's progress to Ardres, that his Highness became acquainted with your arrival within his kingdom."

The Knight was proceeding to inform her of the circumstances which had occurred, when the quick sound of horses'

feet was heard without, joined to the clanging of arms, the jingling of spurs and trappings, and various rough cries in the English tongue.

"Have her! but I will have her, by the Lord!" cried a voice near the door; and in a moment after, a Knight, armed at all points, strode into the cottage. "How now! How now!" cried he; "what is all this? Ah, Monsieur de Bussy," he continued, changing his language to broken abominable French, "what are you doing with this lady?"

"I come, Sir John Hardacre," answered the Frenchman, "to invite her to the Court of Francis of France, whose vassal the lady is."

"And I am come," replied the Englishman, "to claim her for Henry King of England, whose born subject she is, and ward of the crown; and so I will have her, and carry her to Guisnes, as I am commanded."

"That depends upon circumstances, Sir," answered the Frenchman, offended at the tone of the other. "You are Governor of Calais, but you do not command here. You are off the English pale, Sir; and I say that without the lady goes with you willingly, and by preference, you shall not take her."

"I shall not!" exclaimed the Englishman. "Who the devil shall stop me?"

"That will I," answered the French Knight; "and I tell you so to your beard."

The Englishman laid his hand upon his sword, and the Frenchman was not slack to follow his example; but Constance interposed. "Hold, hold! gentlemen," cried she; "I am not worthy of such contention. Monsieur le Bussy, favour me by offering every expression of my humble duty to his Highness, your noble King; and show him that I intended instantly to have obeyed his commands, and follow you to his court, and that I am compelled, against my will, to do otherwise.—Sir John Hardacre, I am ready to accompany you."

"If such be your will, fair lady," replied the French Knight, "I have nothing but to execute your charge. However, I must repeat, that without your full consent, you shall not be taken from French ground, or I am no true knight."

An angry replication trembled on the lip of the English Captain, but Constance stopped its utterance, by once more declaring her willingness to go; and the French officer, bowing low, thrust back his sword into the sheath, and left the cottage somewhat out of humour with the event of his expedition.

When he and his followers had ridden away, Sir John Hardacre called up a lady's horse, which one of his men-at-arms led by the bridle; and after permitting Constance to make some change of her apparel, and to pay the good folks of the cottage for her entertainment, he placed her in the saddle, and holding the bridle himself, led her away at a quick pace towards Guisnes. He was a rough old soldier, somewhat hardened by long military service, but the beauty and gentleness of his fair prisoner (for such indeed may we consider poor Constance to have been) somewhat softened his acerbity; and after riding on for near an hour in silence, during which he revolved at least twenty ways of addressing the lady, without pleasing himself with any, he began by a somewhat bungling excuse, both for his errand and his manner of executing it.

"I suppose, Sir," replied Constance, coldly, "that you have done your duty. Whether you have done it harshly or not, is for you to consider."

This quite put a stop to all the Knight's intentions of conversation, and did not particularly sooth his humour; so that for many miles along the road he failed not every moment to turn round his head, and vent his spleen upon his men in various high-seasoned curses, for faults which they might or might not have committed, as the case happened; the Knight's powers of objurgation not only extending to the cursing itself, but also to supplying the cause.

It was nearly seven o'clock when they began to approach the little town of Guisnes, but at that season of the year the full light of day was still shining upon all the objects round about; and Constance might perceive, as they rode up, all the bustle and crowding, and idle activity caused by the arrival of the Court.

Her heart sunk when she saw it, and thought of all she might then have to endure. Under any other circumstances, however, it would have been a gay and a pleasing sight,—so full of life and activity, glitter and show, was every thing that met the eye.

To the southward of the town of Guisnes, upon the large open green that extended on the outside of the walls, was to be seen a multitude of tents, of all kinds and colours, with a multitude of busy human beings, employed in raising fresh pavilions on every open space, or in decorating those already spread, with streamers, pennons, and banners of all the bright hues under the sun. Long lines of horses and mules loaded with armour or baggage, and ornamented with gay ribbons to

put them in harmony with the scene, were winding about all over the plain, some proceeding towards the town, some seeking the tents of their several lords, while, mingled among them, appeared various bands of soldiers, on horseback and on foot, with the rays of the declining sun catching upon the heads of their bills and lances; and together with the white cassock and broad red cross, marking them out from all the other objects. Here and there too, might be seen a party of knights and gentlemen entering over the plain, and enjoying the bustle of the scene, or standing in separate groups, issuing their orders for the erection and garnishing of their tents; while couriers, and pursuivants, and heralds, in all their gay dresses, mingled with mule drivers, lacqueys, and peasants, armourers, pages, and tent-stretchers, made up the living part of the landscape.

Behind, lay the town of Guisnes, with the forest at its back; and a good deal nearer, the castle, with its protecting guns pointed over the plain: but the most striking object, and that which instantly caught the eye, was a building raised immediately in front of the citadel, on which all that art could devise, or riches could procure, had been lavished, to render it a palace fit for the luxurious King, who was about to make it his temporary residence.

From the distance at which they were, when it first struck her sight, Constance could only perceive that it was a vast and splendid edifice, apparently square, and seeming to offer a façade of about four hundred feet on every side, while the sun, catching on the gilding, with which it was covered, and the immense quantity of glass that it contained, rendered it like some great ornament of gold, enriched with brilliants.

Although her heart was sad, and nothing that she saw tended to dispel its gloom, she could not refrain from gazing round with a half-curious, half-anxious glance upon all the gay objects that surrounded her; almost fearing to be recognised by some one that had known her at the court, now that she was led along as a kind of prisoner,—a single woman, amid a band of rude soldiers. Sir John Hardacre, however, spurred on towards the bridge, which was nearly impassable, by the number of beasts of burden and their drivers by which it was covered; and standing but on a little ceremony with his fellow-lieges, he dashed through the midst of them all, cursing one, and striking another, and overturning a third, much to Constance's horror and dismay. Having reached the other side, and created by his haste as much confusion and discom-

fort as he could in his passage, the surly captain slackened his pace, muttering something about dignity, and turned his rein towards the temporary palace of the King. Proceeding slowly amid a multitude, many of whom had seen her before, and whose remark she was very willing to escape, Constance's only resource was to fix her eyes upon the palace, and to busy herself in the contemplation of its splendour.

Raised upon a high platform, it was not only visible from every part of the plain, but itself commanded a view of the whole gay scene below, with its tents and its multitudes, standing as a sort of nucleus to all the magnificence around.

Before the gate, to which Sir John Hardacre took his way, and which was itself a massy arch, flanked by two towers raised upon the platform, there stood two objects not unworthy of remark, as exemplifying the tastes of the day: the one was a magnificent fountain, richly wrought with arches and arabesques, painted in fine gold and blue, supporting a figure of Bacchus crowned with vine leaves, over whose head appeared inscribed, in letters of gold, "*Faites bonne chère qui voudra.*" No unmeaning invitation, for the fountain below ceased not to pour forth three streams of various coloured wines, supplied by reservoirs in the interior of the palace. On the other side of the gate, was seen four golden lions supporting a pillar of bronze, round the shaft of which twined up various gilt wreaths, interlaced together; while on the summit stood a statue of Venus's "purblind son and heir," pointing his arrows at those who approached the gate.

Nevertheless, it was not on the charmed cup of the one, or the bended bow of the other chicken deity, that the battlemented arch above mentioned, relied for defence; for in the several windows, were placed gigantic figures of men in armour, apparently in the act of hurling down enormous rocks upon the head of whatever venturous stranger should attempt to pass the prescribed bound. At the same time appeared round about various goodly paintings of the demigods of story; the Hercules's, the Theseus's, the Alexanders, fabulous and historical; while, showing strangely enough in such company, many a fat porter and yeoman of the lodge loitered about in rich liveries, as familiar with the gods and goddesses, as if they had been born upon Olympus, and swaddled in Tempé.

At the flight of steps which led to this gate, Sir John Hardacre dismounted, and lifting Lady Constance from her horse, passed on into the inner court of the palace, which would

indeed have been not only splendid but elegant, had it not been for a few instances of the same refined taste, which we have just noticed. The four inner faces of the building were perfectly regular, consisting of two stories, the lower one of which was almost entirely of glass, formed into plain and bow windows alternately, separated from each other by a slight column of gold, and surrounded by a multitude of arabesques and garlands. Exactly opposite to the gate appeared a vestibule, thrown a little forward from the building, and surmounted by four large bow windows, supported on trimmers, the corbels of which represented a thousand strange gilt faces, looking out from a screen of olive branches, cast in lead and painted green; while various tall statues, in silver armour, were ranged on each side, as guards to the entrance.

It was towards this sort of hall, that Sir John Hardacre led poor Constance de Grey, to whose heart all the gayety and splendour of the scene seemed but to communicate a more chilling sensation of friendless loneliness; while the very gaze and whispering of the royal servants, who had all known of her flight, and now witnessed her return, made the quick blood mount into her beautiful cheek, as she was hurried along by the brutal soldier, without any regard to her feelings, or compassion for her fears.

"You must wait here, Mistress Constance," said he, having led her into the vestibule, which was full of yeomen and grooms, "while I go and tell the right reverend Father Lord Cardinal, that I have brought you."

"Here!" exclaimed Constance, casting her eyes round, "surely you do not mean me to wait here, among the servants?"

"Why, where would you go?" demanded he, roughly, "I've no other place to put you.—Wait here, wait here, and mind you don't run away again."

Constance could support no more, and covering her face with her hands, she burst into a violent flood of tears. At that moment a voice that she knew, struck her ears,—"This to my cousin, Sir!" exclaimed Lord Darby, who had heard what passed as he descended a flight of stairs which led away to the left, "this to my cousin, Sir John Hardacre! You would do better to jump off the donjon of Rochester Castle, than to leave her here with lacqueys and footboys."

"And why should I not," demanded the soldier, his eyes flashing fire. "Mind your own affairs, my Lord Darby, and let me mind mine."

"You are an unfeeling old villain, Sir," answered the Earl, passing him and taking Constance by the hand. "Yes, Sir! stare your fill! I say you are an unfeeling villain, and neither knight nor gentleman."

The soldier laid his hand upon his sword and drew it half way out of its sheath. "Knock him down! knock him down!" cried a dozen voices. "The precincts of the court! out with him! Have his hand off!" Sir John Hardacre thrust his weapon back into the sheath, gazing however grimly round, as if he would fain have used it upon some one.

"Your brutal violence Sir," said Lord Darby, "will bring upon you, if you heed not, a worse punishment than I can inflict; yet you will not find me in a proper place, unwilling to give you a lesson on what is due to a lady. Come, Constance, I will lead you to her Highness, where you will meet, I am sure, a kind reception. You, Sir, do your errand to my Lord Cardinal, who shall be informed by me of your noble and knightly treatment of the Lady de Grey."

Thus saying, he led Constance through a long corridor to an antechamber, wherein stood two of the Queen's pages. Here Lord Darby paused, and sent one of the attendants to request an audience, taking the opportunity of the time they waited, to sooth the mind of his fair cousin by informing her of all that had passed in her absence, and assuring her that the Queen had ever been her warmest defender.

All the news that he gave her, of course, took a heavy weight from Constance's mind; and drying her eyes, she congratulated him gladly on his approaching marriage, and would fain—very fain, have asked if he could give her any such consolitary information in regard to Darnley, but the Earl had never once mentioned his name, and she knew not how to begin the subject herself. While considering, and hesitating, whether to ask boldly or not, the queen's page returned and ushered them to her presence. Constance was still much agitated, and even the kind and dignified sweetness, the motherly tenderness with which Katharine received her, a tenderness which she had not known for so long, overcame her, and she wept as much as if she had been most unhappy.

The queen understood it all, and sending Lord Darby away, she soon won Constance to her usual placid mood, and then questioning her of all the dangers and sorrows she had undergone, she gave her the best of all balms, sympathy; trembling at her account of the shipwreck, and melted even to tears by the death of the good clergyman.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Men might say
Till this time pomp was single, but now married
To one above itself."

SHAKSPEARE.

MANY were the anxious eyes turned towards the sky on the morning of the seventh of June, the day appointed for the meeting of the two Kings of France and England; for some inauspicious clouds had ushered in the dawn, and several of those persons who take a delight in prognosticating evil, whenever they can find occasion,—who enjoy mingling the sour with whatever is sweet in life; in short, the lemon-squeezers of society had taken care to affirm, that they had felt several drops of rain, and to prophesy that it would pour before night. To put their vaticination out of joint, however, the jolly summer sun came like a cleanly housemaid, towards eight o'clock, and with his broom of rays, swept all the dirty clouds from the floor of heaven. By this time the bustle of preparation had begun at the town of Guisnes. All was activity among the tents, and many a lord and gentleman was already on his horse, arraying his men in order of battle, under the walls of the castle, from the gates of which presently issued forth the archer-guard of the King of England, and took the front of the array. Not long after, Lord Essex, the Earl Marshal, appeared on the plain, and riding along the line of foot, gave the strictest orders to the various officers for maintaining regularity and tranquillity through the day; well knowing that the excited hilarity of such occasions often creates more serious evils than infinitely worse feelings. Another cause, however, seemed likely to have interrupted the general good-humour; for, in the midst of his injunctions to maintain order and propriety of demeanour towards their French allies, an officer was seen spurring at full speed from the side of Ardres, and as he rode up, it was very evident, by his countenance, that the good Captain, Richard Gibson, was not the best pleased man in the world. All eyes were turned upon him, and a dead silence ensued amid the archers, while the Earl demanded, "Why, how now, Gibson, what is the matter?"

"So please you, my Lord," replied the officer, "the four pennons of white and green, which, by your command, I set up on the edge of the hill, above the valley of Andern, have been vilely thrown down by the French Lord Chatillon, who says, that as the French have none on the other hill, he wills not that we have any either."

A loud murmuring made itself heard at this news among the footmen; and one of the young gallants, riding near the Earl, put spurs to his horse, as if to ride away to the scene of the dispute.

"Silence!" cried the Earl, over whose cheek also an angry flush had passed at first, but who speedily recovered his temper. "Brian, come back, come back, I say, Sir, let not a man stir!"

"What, must we stand tamely, and be insulted by the French?" cried the youth, unwillingly reining in his horse.

"They do not insult us, Sir," replied Lord Essex, wisely determined not to let any trifling punctilio disturb the harmony of the meeting, yet knowing how difficult it is to rule John Bull from his surly humour. "They do not insult us. The pennons were set up for their convenience, to show them the place of meeting, which is within the English pale. If they choose to be such fools, as to risk missing the way, and go a mile round, why let them; we shall but laugh at them when they come."

"The matter thus turned off," he whispered a few words to Gibson, and sending him back to the vale of Andern, proceeded, with the aid of heralds and other officers of arms, to arrange all the ceremonies of the march. However, various were the reports that spread among the people, concerning the intentions of the French, some declaring openly, that they believed they intended to surround the field with a great force, and take the King of England prisoner. Others shook the wise head, and implied much more than they ventured to say; and many a poor rogue, among those who "talk of court news as if they were God's spies," pretended that they had been with the French power, and heard all about it; so that they would tell you, the very cunning of the thing, and its fashion, and when it was to be.

While rumour was thus exercising her hundred tongues, and, as usual, lying with them all, the warning gun was fired from the castle of Guisnes, giving notice that the King of England was ready to set out, and all hurried to place themselves in order. In a few minutes the distant roar of another large piece of artillery was heard from Ardres, answering the first;

and for the five minutes before the procession was formed, like the five minutes of tuning before a concert, all was noise, clamour, and confusion.—The sounding of the trumpets to horse, the shouts of the various leaders, the loud cries of the marshals and heralds, and the roaring of the artillery from the castle, as the King put his foot in the stirrup, all combined to make one general outcry rarely equalled.

Gradually the tumult subsided—gradually also the confused assemblage assumed a regular form. Flags, and pennons, and banderols, embroidered banners, and scutcheons; silver pillars, and crosses, and crooks, ranged themselves in long line, and the bright procession, an interminable stream of living gold, began to wind across the plain. First came about five hundred of the gayest and wealthiest gentlemen of England, below the rank of baron; squires, knights, and bannerets, rivalling each other in the richness of their apparel, and the beauty of their horses; while the pennons of the knights fluttered above their heads, marking the place of the English chivalry; next appeared the proud barons of the realm, each with his banner borne before him, and followed by a custrel with the shield of his arms. To these again succeeded the bishops, not in the simple robes of the Protestant clergy, but in the more gorgeous habits of the Church of Rome; while close upon their steps, rode the higher nobility, surrounding the immediate person of the King, and offering the most splendid mass of gold and jewels that the summer sun ever shone upon.

Slowly the procession moved forward, to allow the line of those on foot to keep an equal pace. Nor did this band offer a less gay and pleasing sight than the cavalcade, for here might be seen the athletic forms of the sturdy English yeomanry, clothed in the various splendid liveries of their several lords, with the family cognizance embroidered on the bosom or the arm, and the banners and banderols of their particular houses carried in the front of each company. Here also was to be seen the picked guard of the King of England, magnificently dressed for the occasion, with the royal banner carried in their centre, by the deputy standard bearer, and the banner of their company by their own ancient. In the rear of all, marshalled by officers appointed for the purpose, came the band of those whose rank did not entitle them to take place in the cavalcade, but who had sufficient interest at court to be admitted to the meeting. Though of an inferior class, this company was not the least splendid in the field, for here were all the wealthy

tradesmen of the court, habited in many a rich garment, furnished by the extravagance of those that rode before; and many a gold chain hung round their necks, that not long ago had lain in the purse of some prodigal customer.

Thus marched on the procession at a walking pace, with steeds neighing, with trumpets sounding; banners and plumes fluttering in the wind, and gold and jewels sparkling in the sunshine; while loud acclaim, and the waving of hats, and hands, and handkerchiefs from those that stayed behind, ushered it forth from the plain of Guisnes.

They had ridden on some way, when a horseman spurred up to the spot where the King rode, and doffing his high plumed hat, bent to his saddle bow, saying, "My King and my Sovereign, I have just been with the French party, and I hold myself bound as your liege, to inform you that they are at least twice as numerous as we are. Your grace will act as in your wisdom you judge fit; but as a faithful and loving subject, I could not let such knowledge sleep in my bosom."

An instant halt took place through the whole cavalcade, and the King for a moment consulted with Wolsey, who rode on his left hand; but Lord Shrewsbury, the Lord Steward, interposed, assuring the King that he had been among the French nobles the night before, and that among them, the same reports prevailed concerning the English. "Therefore, Sir," continued he, "if I were worthy to advise, your Grace would march forward without hesitation; for sure I am that the French mean no treachery."

"We shall follow your advice, Lord Steward," replied the King; "let us march on."

"On before! on before!" cried the heralds at the word. The trumpets again sounded, and the procession moving forward, very soon reached the brow of the hill that looks into the vale of Andern. A gentle slope of not more than three hundred yards, led from the highest part of each of the opposite halls into the centre of the valley, in the midst of which was pitched the most magnificent tent, that ever a luxurious imagination devised. The canopy, the walls, the hangings were all of cloth of gold; the posts, the cones, the cords, the tassels, the furniture, were all of the same rare metal. Wherever the eye turned, nothing but that shining ore met its view, so that it required no very brilliant fancy to name it at once, the *Field of the Cloth of Gold*.

On reaching the verge of the descent, the cavalcade spread out, lining the side of the hill for some way down, and facing

the line of the valley. Each cavalier placed himself unhesitatingly in the spot assigned him, by the officers of arms; while the body of foot were drawn up in array to the left, by the captains of the King's guard; so that not the least confusion or tumult took place; and the whole multitude in perfect order, presented a long and glittering front to the opposite hill, before any of the French party appeared, except a few straggling horsemen sent to keep the ground.

As soon as the whole line was formed, and when by the approaching sound of the French trumpets, it was ascertained that the Court of France was not far distant, Henry himself drew out from the ranks, ready to descend to the meeting: and never did a more splendid, or more princely monarch present himself before so noble a host. Tall, stately, athletic, with a countenance full of imperious dignity, and mounted on a horse that seemed proudly conscious of the royalty of its rider, Henry rode forward to a small hillock, about twenty yards in advance of his subjects; and halting upon the very edge of the hill, with his attendants grouped behind him, and a clear background of sunny light, throwing his figure out from all the other objects, he offered a subject on which Wouvermans might well have exercised his pencil. Over his wide chest and shoulders, he wore a loose vest of cloth of silver, damasked and ribbed with gold. This was plaited and bound tightly towards the waist, while it was held down from the neck, by the golden collars of many a princely order, and the broad baldrick studded with jewels, to which was suspended his sword. His jewelled hat was also of the same cloth, and in the only representation of this famous meeting that I have met with, which can be relied upon,—having been executed at the time, he appears with a vast plume of feathers, rising from the left side of his hat, and falling over to his saddle behind. Nor was the horse less splendidly attired than the rider. Its housings, its trappers, its headstall, and its reins, were all curiously wrought and embossed with bullion, while a thousand fanciful ornaments of gold filagree work, hung about it in every direction.

Behind the King appeared Sir Henry Guilford, Master of the Horse, leading a spare charger for the monarch; not indeed with any likelihood of the King using it, but more as a piece of state ornament than any thing else, in the same manner as the sword of state was borne by the Marquis of Dorset. A little behind, appeared nine youths of noble family, as the King's henchmen, mounted on beautiful horses trapped with

golden scales, and sprinkled throughout their housings, with loose bunches of spangles, which, twinkling in the sunshine, gave an inconceivable lightness and brilliancy to their whole appearance.

Shortly after this glittering group had taken its station in front of the English line, the first parties of the French nobility began to appear on the opposite hill, and spreading out upon its side, offered a corresponding mass of splendour to that formed by the array of England. Very soon the whole of Francis's Court had deployed; and after a pause of a few minutes, during which the two hosts seemed to consider each other with no small admiration, and in profound silence, the trumpets from the French side sounded, and the Constable Duke of Bourbon, bearing a naked sword upright, began to descend the hill. Immediately behind him followed the French Monarch, superbly arrayed, and mounted on a magnificent Barbary horse, covered from head to foot with gold. Instantly on beholding this, the English trumpets replied, and the Marquis of Dorset, unsheathing the sword of state, moved slowly forward before the King. Henry having the Lord Cardinal on his left, and followed by his immediate suite, now descended the hill, and arrived in the valley exactly at the same moment as Francis. The two sword-bearers, who preceded them, fell back each to the right of his own sovereign; and the monarchs spurring forth their highly managed horses, met in the midst and embraced each other on horseback. Difficult and strange as such a manœuvre may seem, it was performed with ease and grace, both the Kings being counted among the most skilful horsemen in Europe; and in truth, as the old historian expresses it, it must have been a marvellous sweet and goodly sight to see these two princes, in the flower of their age, in the height of their strength, and the dignity of their manly beauty, commanding two great nations, that had been so long rivals and enemies, instead of leading hostile armies to desolate and destroy, meet in that peaceful valley, and embrace like brothers in the sight of the choice nobility of either land.

Two grooms and two pages, who had followed on foot, now ran to hold the stirrup and the rein, each of his own monarch; and springing to the ground, the Kings embraced again; after which, clasped arm in arm, they passed the barrier, and entered the golden tent, wherein two thrones were raised beneath one canopy.

"Henry of England, my dear brother," said the King of France, as soon as they were seated, "thus far have I tra-

velled to see you, and do you pleasure; willing to hold you to my heart with brotherly love, and to show you that I am your friend: and surely I believe that you esteem me as I am. The realms that I command, and the powers that I possess, are not small; but if they may ever be of aid to my brother the King of England, I shall esteem them greater than before."

"The greatness of your realms, Sir, and the extent of your power," replied Henry, "weigh as nothing in my eyes, compared with your high and princely qualities; and it is to interchange regard with you, and renew in person our promises of love, that I have here passed the seas, and come to the very verge of my dominions."

With such greetings commenced the interview of the two Kings, who soon called to them the Cardinal, and seating him beside them, with much honour, they commanded him to read the articles which he had drawn up, for the arrangement and ordering of their future interviews. Wolsey complied; and all that he proposed, seemed well to please both the monarchs, till he proceeded to stipulate, that when the King of England should go over to the town of Ardres, to revel with the Queen and ladies of France, the King of France should at the same time repair to the town of Guisnes, there to be entertained by the Queen of England. At this Francis mused, "Nay, nay, my good Lord Cardinal," said he, "faith, I fear not to trust myself with my brother of England, at his good castle of Guisnes; without holding him as a hostage in my court for my safe return; and marry I am sure he would put equal confidence in me, though I stayed not in this city till he was on his journey back."

"This clause is not inserted, most Noble Sovereign," replied Wolsey, "from any doubt or suspicion that one gracious King has of the other; for surely all trust and amicable confidence exist between ye: but it is for the satisfaction of the minds of your liege subjects, who not understanding the true nature of princely friendship, might be filled with black apprehensions, were they to see their monarch confide himself, without warrant of safety, in the power of another nation."

"Well, well, my good Lord," replied Francis, "let it be, time will show us." And from that moment he seemed to pay little attention to all the precautionary measures by which the cautious Wolsey proposed to secure the future meetings of the two Kings, from the least danger to either party. The generous mind of the French monarch revolted at the suspicious

policy of the Cardinal; and agreeing to any thing the other thought proper, he mentally revolved his own plans for shaming the English monarch and his minister, out of their cold and injurious doubts.

The arrangement of these articles was the only displeasing circumstance that cast a shadow upon the meeting: all the rest passed in gayety and joy. A sumptuous banquet was soon placed before them, and various of the nobles of England and France, were called to mingle in the royal conversation, while the monarchs were at table.

In the meanwhile, the two courts and their retainers remained arranged on the opposing side of the hill; the Englishmen, with their characteristic rigidity, standing each man in his place as immoveable as a statue, while the livelier Frenchmen, impatient of doing nothing, soon quitted their ranks, and falling into broken masses, amused themselves as best they might; many of them crossing the valley, and with national facility beginning to make acquaintances with their new allies, nothing repulsed with the blunt reception they met with. Not that the English were inhospitable; for having, as usual, taken good care that no provision should be wanting against the calls of hunger or thirst, they communicated willingly to their neighbours of the comforts they had brought with them, sending over many a flagon of wine and hypocras, much to the consolation of the French, who had taken no such wise precautions against the two great internal enemies.

In about an hour, the hangings of the tent were drawn back, and the two Kings reappeared, ready to separate for the day. The grooms led up the horses; and Francis and Henry embracing with many professions of amity, mounted and turned their steps each to his several dwelling.

The English procession marched back in the same order as it came, and arrived without interruption at the green plain of Guisnes, where Henry, ordering the band of footmen to halt, rode along before them, making them a gay and familiar speech, and bidding them be merry if they loved their King. Shouts and acclamations answered the monarch's speech, and the nobles joining in his intent, showered their largess upon their retainers as they followed along the line. The last band that Henry came to, was that of the privileged tradesmen of the court, most of whom he recognised, possessing, in a high degree, that truly royal quality of never forgetting any one he had once known. To each, he had some frank, bluff sentence to address, while they, with heads uncapped and bending low,

enjoyed with proud hearts the honour of being spoken to by the King, and thought how they could tell it to all their neighbours and gossips when they got to England. As he rode on, Henry perceived in the second rank, a face that he remembered, which being attached to a very pliable neck, kept bending down with manifold reverences, not unlike the nodding of a mandarin cast in china ware.

"Ha! my good clothier, Jekin Groby," cried the King, "come forth, man! what, come forth, I say."

Jekin Groby rushed forward from behind, knocking on one side the royal honey merchant, and fairly throwing down the household fishmonger, who stood before him; then casting himself on his knees by the side of the King's horse, he clasped the palms of his hands together, and turned up his eyes piteously to the monarch's countenance, exclaiming, "Justice! justice! your Grace's worship! If your royal stomach be full of justice, as folks say, give me justice."

"Justice!" cried Henry, laughing at the sad and deplorable face poor Jekin thought necessary to assume for the purpose of moving his compassion. "Justice on whom, man, ha? Faith, if any man have done thee wrong, he shall repent it, as I am a King—though, good Jekin, I sent for thee a month ago, to furnish cloth for all the household, and thou wert not to be found."

"Lord a' mercy!" cried Jekin, and I've missed the job! but it ought all to be put in the bill. Pray, your Grace's worship, put it in the bill, against that vile Sir Payan Wileton, who kidnapped me on your own royal highway, robbed me of my bag full of angels, and sent me to sea, where I was so sick, your Grace—you can't think how sick! And then they beat me with rope's ends, and made me go up aloft, and damned me for a landlubber, and a great deal more—all on account of that Sir Payan Wileton!"

"Ha!" cried the King, "Sir Payan Wileton again! I had forgot him! However, good Jekin, I cannot hear you now—come to my chamber to-morrow before I rise, ha, man? then I will hear and do you justice, if it be on the highest man in the land. There is my signet—the page will let you in—at six o'clock man, fail not!"

"I told you so," cried Jekin, starting upon his feet, and looking round him with delight as the King rode away; "I told you, he would make that black thief give me back my angels. I knew his noble heart—Lord 'a mercy, 'tis a gracious *Prince*, surely!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

"—— Let some o' the guard be ready.
CRAN.—For me?
Must I go like a traitor then?"

SHAKSPEARE.

AND where was Osborne Darnley all this while?

Wait a little, dearly beloved, and you shall hear more. It was not yet five o'clock in the morning, and a sweet morning it was—the sun had just risen; and spreading all over the eastern sky, there was that soft lustrous tint of early light, that surely ought be called hope-colour, it promises so many bright moments for the coming day. It was not yet five o'clock in the morning, when the western sally-port of the castle of Ardres, was opened by a little page not higher than my thumb, as the old story-book goes, who looked cautiously about, first to the right, and then to the left, to see if any one was abroad and stirring; but the only person who had risen, was the matutinal sun, so that the page could see nothing but the blue sky, and the green fields, and the gray stone walls of the castle, whose ancientness, like the antiquity of a beggar's coat, had plastered them all over with patches of green and yellow lichens. Having looked to his heart's content, he next listened; but no sound could he hear, but the light singing of the lark, and the loud snoring of the sentinel on the neighbouring bastion, who with head propped on his halberd, kept any thing but silent watch, while the vigilant sun, looking over the wall, spied out all the weaknesses of the place; and now, having listened as well as looked, the boy withdrew once more within the walls. He left, however, the door open, and in a few minutes two horsemen rode forth, each wrapped up in a large Spanish cloak, with a chaperon, as Fleurange calls it, or in other words, an immense hood, which covered the whole head, and disguised the person completely.

As soon as they were fairly out, the page, who had accompanied them so far, returned, and closed the sally-port; and the two travellers cantered lightly over the green, to a little wood that lay before the castle. When they were fully concealed by the trees, among which they wound along, following

the sinuosities of a little sandy road, wherein two, but only two, might ride abreast, they both, as by common consent, threw back their hoods, and letting their cloaks fall upon their horse's crupper, discovered the two powerful forms of the good Knight, Osborne Lord Darnley, and Francis the First, King of France. Both were dressed with much magnificence, and both so similarly (for so the King had willed), that though one was a very dark man, and the other fair, they might well have been taken for two noble brothers; each bearing the star and collar of St. Michael, with the velvet mortier and short white plume, the embroidered cloak of purple velvet, fixed on the right shoulder, and fastened round to the girdle beneath the left elbow, and the broad gold baldrick, with the heavy double-edged sword.

"Well, my friend, and my deliverer," said the King, as they rode on, "'twill go hard, but I will restore you to your King's favour; and even should he remain inexorable, which I will not believe, you must make France your country. We will try to win your fair Constance for you, from that suspicious Cardinal, of which fear not, for I know a certain way to gain him to any thing; and then I see no cause, why in so fair a land as France, and favoured by her King, you may not be as happy as in that little sea-bound spot called England."

By this, it will easily be seen, that Sir Osborne had confided in the French King some of even his most private thoughts; and had given him an insight into his hopes and wishes, as well as into his former expectations and their disappointment.—There was a generous frankness about Francis, whose contagion was very difficult to resist, nor would the Knight have had any object in resisting it.

Before proceeding farther, however, it may be necessary to say a few words concerning the events which had occurred since the Knight's courage and skill had saved the King's life from Shoenvelt and his adventurers. One may well imagine, what anxiety had reigned among the monarch's followers, in the forest near Lillers, when they found that Francis, after having separated from their party, did not rejoin them on the track appointed for the hunt. Such occurrences, however, having several times happened before, and the King having always returned in safety, they concluded that he, and Count William of Firstenberg, must have taken the other road to Aire, and that they would find him there on their arrival.—When they did reach that town, their inquiries immediately announced that the King was missing.

The news spread rapidly to the whole court, and soon reached the ears of his mother the Dutchess of Angoulême, who became almost frantic on hearing it, giving him up for lost from that moment, as she had good reasons to believe that Count William entertained designs against his life. Her active spirit it was, that first discovered the treachery of the Burgundian, which she had instantly communicated to the King; but the generous mind of Francis refused all credit to the news, and he continued his confidence toward Firstenberg, without the slightest alteration, till at length, more certain proofs of his designs were obtained, which induced the monarch to act with that fearless magnanimity which we have seen him display towards his treacherous favourite in the forest of Lillers.

Immediately that the King's absence was known, bands of horsemen were sent out in various directions to obtain news of him, but in vain. Convinced, by the account of the hunters, that he had quitted the wood, and that if he were therein they could not find him by night, they searched in every other place than that in which they were likely to be successful, so that the whole night that Francis spent sleeping tranquilly in the Charbonier's cottage, his guards were out towards Pernès, Fruges, and St. Pol, searching for him without success. When morning came, however, fresh parties were sent off to examine every part of the forest, and it was one of these that came up to the spot not long after the defeat of Shoenvelt and his party.

The joy occasioned by the King's safe return, was not a little heightened by the danger he had undergone, and every one to whom his life was precious, contended who should do more honour to his gallant deliverer. Francis himself knew not what recompense to offer to Sir Osborne for the signal service he had rendered him; and with the delicacy of a truly generous mind, he exacted from him a particular account of his whole life, that he might adapt the gift or honour he wished to confer exactly to the situation of the Knight. Darnley understood the motive of the noble-hearted monarch, and told him all without reserve; and Francis, now furnished with the best means of showing his gratitude, resolved not to lose the opportunity.

Thus, for the few days that preceded the meeting between Guisnes and Ardres, the King highly distinguished the Knight, made him many magnificent presents, called a chapter of the order of St. Michael, and had him installed in form; but knowing the jealous nature of his own nobles, he offered him no employment in his service; and even when the Constable

Bourbon, who knew and appreciated Darnley's military talents, proposed to the King to give him a company of men-at-arms, as a reward for the great service he had rendered to the whole nation, Francis negatived it at once, saying openly, that the Lord Darnley was but a visiter at the court of France.

Having premised thus much, we will now take up the travellers at the moment of their entering into the wood, near Ardres, through which they passed, conversing over the various circumstances of Sir Osborne's situation.

"It is strange!" said Francis, as the Knight repeated the manner of his dismissal from the English court; "I do not comprehend it! It is impossible that your going there under a feigned name, to win King Henry's favour, should be construed as a crime, and made matter of such strong accusation against you." After musing for a moment, he proceeded, "Do not think I would imply, good Knight, that you could be really guilty of any higher offence against your King; but be you sure, something has been laid to your charge more than you imagine."

"On my honour as a Knight," replied Darnley, "I have accused myself to your Highness of the worst crimes upon my conscience, as if your grace was my confessor; though I will own, that it appears to me, also, most strange and inexplicable. I have heard, indeed, that the Lord Cardinal never suffers any one to be too near the King's regard; and that if he sees any especial favour shown, he is sure to find some accusation against its object; but I can hardly believe that so great a man would debase himself, to be a false accuser."

"I know not! I know not!" answered Francis, quickly, "there is nothing so jealous as a favourite; and what will not jealousy do? My diadem against a Spanish crown,"* he continued, laughingly, referring to his contention with the Emperor Charles, "Henry of England knows you under no other name than that of Sir Osborne Maurice. However, I will be politic, and know the whole before I speak. Do you put your honour in my hands? and will you abide by what I shall undertake for you?"

"Most willingly, your Highness," replied the Knight, "whatever you say for me, that will I maintain; on horseback or on foot, with sword or lance, as long as my life do hold."

* The original words of Francis were *ma lance contre un ecu d'Espogne*, ecu meaning either a shield or a crown-piece.

Thus conversing they rode on, following the windings of the woody lane in which they were, till the forest, skirting on to the north-west of Ardres, opened out upon the plain of Guisnes. As soon as the castle and town were in sight, the French monarch put his horse into a quick pace, saying with a smile to Sir Osborne,—"Your prudent Wolsey, and my good brother Henry, will be much surprised to see me in their castle alone, after all their grave precautions. By heaven! did kingly dignity imply suspicion of all the world like theirs, I would tear away my crown and feed my mother's sheep."

The night after the first meeting of the Kings, Henry had retired to sleep in the fortress rather than in his palace without the walls; part of which, comprising his private apartments, had been found insecure, from the hurry in which it had been built. Of this circumstance, the King of France had been informed by some of his court, who had passed their evening at Guisnes, and it was therefore to the castle that he turned his rein.

Passing amid the tents, in most of which Somnus still held undisturbed dominion, Francis and Sir Osborne galloped up to the drawbridge, on which an early party of the guard were sunning themselves in the morning light; some looking idly over into the moat, some gazing with half closed eyes towards the sky; some playing at an antique and classical game with mutton bones, while their captain stood by the portcullis, rubbing his hands and enjoying the sweetness of the morning.

No sooner did Francis perceive them, than drawing his sword he galloped in among them, crying,—"Rendez vous, Messieurs, rendez vous! La place est à moi."

At first, the archers scattered back confused, and some had their hands on their short swords; but several who had seen the King the day before, almost instantly recognised him, and the cry became general of "The King of France! The King of France!" In the mean time, Francis rode up to the captain, and putting his sword's point to the officer's throat, "Yield!" cried he, "rescue or no rescue, or you are a dead man."

"I yield, I yield! my Lord!" cried the captain, entering into the King's humour, and bending his knee. "Rescue or no rescue, I yield myself your Grace's prisoner."

"A castle soon taken," cried Francis, turning to Sir Osborne. "Now," added he to the officer, "since the place is mine, lead me to the chamber of my good brother the King of England."

"His Grace is at present asleep," replied the captain, hesi-

tating. "If your Highness will repose yourself in the great hall, he shall be informed instantly of your presence."

"No, no," cried the King, "show me his chamber. Nothing will serve me, but that I will sound his reveillez myself.—Come, Darnley," and springing from his horse he followed the officer, who, now forced to obey, led him into the castle, and up the grand staircase, towards the King's bed-chamber.

All was silence as they went. Henry and the whole court had revelled late the night before, so that few even of the serving men had thought fit to quit their truckle beds so early in the morning. A single page, however, was to be seen as they entered a long corridor, which took up one whole side of the large square tower in the centre of the castle. He was standing before a door at the farther extremity; and to him the captain pointed. "The King's anteroom, your Highness, is where you see that Page," said he, "and let me beg your gracious forgiveness if I leave you here, for, indeed, I dare conduct you no farther."

"Go, go," cried the King, good-humouredly. "I will find it now myself. You, Darnley, stay here. I doubt not soon to send for you with good news."

With his sword still drawn in his hand, the King now advanced to the Page, who seeing a stranger come forward with so menacing an air, might have entertained some fears, had he not beheld the captain of the guard conduct him thither; not at all knowing the person of Francis, however, as he had not been present at the meeting of the Kings, he closed the door of the anteroom, which had before been open behind him, and, placing himself in the way, prepared to oppose the entrance of any one.

"Which is the chamber of my brother, the King of England?" demanded Francis, as he came up; but the Page, not understanding a word of French, only shook his head; keeping his back, at the same time, firmly against the door, thinking it was some wild French Lord, who knew not what was due to royalty.

"It is the King of France," said Sir Osborne, advancing, as he saw the Page's embarrassment. "Let him pass. It is the King of France."

The Page stared and hesitated, but Francis, taking him by the shoulder, twisted him round as he had been a child, and opening the door passed in. The Page immediately closed it again, putting himself before the Knight, whose face he now remembered. "I must not let your worship in," said he.

thinking Sir Osborne wished to follow the monarch. "The King of France, of course, I dared not stop, but it is as much as my life is worth to suffer any one else to pass."

"I seek not to enter, good Master Snell," said the Knight. "Unless his Grace sends for me, I shall not intrude myself on his royal presence." This said, with busy thoughts he began to walk up and down the gallery, and the Page, presently after, retiring into the antechamber, left him, for the time, to his own contemplations.

Much subject had the Knight for thought, though it was of that nature that profiteth not: for little signified it, as it seemed, how-much-soever he took counsel with himself, his fate was in the hands of others, and beyond his power to influence or determine.

He could not help musing, however, over all the strange turns which his fortune had taken within the brief space of the last three months; and strangely mingled were his sensations, on finding himself, at the end of the review, standing there, once more within the precincts of the court of England, from which he had been driven hardly fifteen days before. A thousand collateral ideas also presented themselves to his mind, suggesting a thousand doubts and fears for those he loved best. What had become of Constance de Grey? he asked himself, and though never had her image for one moment left his mind in his wanderings, though it had been his companion in the journey, his solace in his waking hours, his dream by night, and his object in every thought and hope, still there was something in being among those objects, and near those beings, amid whom he had been accustomed to see her, that rendered his anxiety about her more impatient; and he would have given no small sum for the presence of one of the newsmongers of the court—those empty idle beings always to be found near the presence of Princes, who like scavengers' carts, make themselves the common receptacle for all the drift of the palace, and hurrying on from one to another, at once receive and spatter forth the rakings of all kennels as they go along.

But no one, whom he could even question, came near him; though from time to time several of the royal servants would pass along the corridor on their various occupations, staring at him as they went by, some remembering him and bowing low, not a little surprised to see him there; some contenting themselves with a critical examination of his dress, and then passing on.

Time, ever long to those who wait, seemed doubly long to

Sir Osborne, to whom so much was in suspense; and so little bustle and activity did there seem in the castle, that he began to fancy that its denizens must have had their eyes touched with Hermes' wand to make them sleep so sound. He walked up and down the corridor, he gazed out of the window into the court-yard, he listened for every opening door. But it was all in vain; no one came—could Francis have forgotten him? he asked himself at last: and then he thought how quickly from the light memories of the great, pass away the sorrows or the welfare of their fellow-creatures; how hardly can they remember, and how happily can they forget—but no, he would not believe it. If every man was renowned for that best and rarest quality of a great man, a heedful remembrance of those who served him, a thoughtful care of those he esteemed, it was Francis of France: and Darnley would not believe that in his case he had forgotten.

Still no one came, though the various noises and the bustle he began to hear in distant parts of the building, announced that the world was more awake than when he arrived. Yet the corridor in which he was, seemed more deserted than ever. The royal servants ceased to pass through, the page showed himself no more, and yet he could distinctly hear steps hurrying along in different directions, and voices, some loud, and some subdued, speaking not far off. Full a hundred times he paced the corridor without a living being passing by; and tired at length, he again placed himself at the window, examining what passed in the court below.

At first it was nearly vacant, a few listless soldiers being its only occupants; but soon there was opened on the other side, a door which communicated with a sort of barrack, situated near the chapel in the inner ballium, and from this proceeded a troop of soldiers and officers of arms, with one or two persons mingled among them, that Sir Osborne imagined to be prisoners. The height at which he was placed above them prevented his perceiving whether this was certainly the case, or seeing their faces, for all that he could discern, was the foreshortened figures of the soldiers and sergeant-at-arms, distinguished from the others by their official habiliments, and passing along, surrounded by the rest, some persons in darker attire, round whom the guard appeared to keep with vigilant care. An instant brought them to the archway, just beneath the spot where he stood, and they were then lost to his sight.

The castle clock struck seven, but so slowly did the hammer fall upon the bell, he thought it would never have done. He now

heard a sound of much speaking not far off, and thought that surely it was Francis taking leave of the King of England; but suddenly it ceased, and all was again silence. Taking patience to his aid, he began again his perambulations; and for another quarter of an hour walked up and down the corridor, hearing still, as he passed the door of the anteroom, a low and indistinct murmuring, which might be either the page speaking in a subdued tone to some other person therein, or some other voices conversing much more loudly in the chamber beyond. The Knight's feelings were wound up to the highest pitch of impatience, when suddenly a deep groan, and then a heavy fall, met his ear. He paused—listened, and could plainly distinguish a door within open, and various voices speaking quick and high; some in French, some in English; but among them was to be heard distinctly the tongue of Henry, and that of Francis,—though what they said was not sufficiently audible to be comprehended. His curiosity, as may be conceived, was not a little excited; but satisfied of the safety of the two Kings, and fearful of being suspected of eaves-dropping, if any one came forth, he once more crossed his arms upon his breast, and began pacing backwards and forwards as before.

A few minutes more elapsed in silence, but at length, when he was at the farther extreme of the corridor, he heard the door of the antechamber open, and turning round, perceived a sergeant-at-arms, followed by four halberdiers, come forth from within, and advance towards him. Sir Osborne turned and met them, when the guard drew up across the passage, and the officer stepped forward.—"Sir Osborne Darnley!" said he, "commonly called Lord Darnley, I arrest you for high treason, in the name of Henry the Eighth King of England and France, and Lord of Ireland, and charge you to surrender to his warrant."

The astonishment of Sir Osborne may more easily be conceived than described. The first appearance of the halberdiers had struck him as strange, and their drawing up across his path might have been some warning, but still he was not at all prepared.

Trusting to the protection of the French King, who had virtually rendered himself responsible for his safety, he had never dreamed of danger; and for a moment or two he stood in silent surprise, till the sergeant demanded, "Do you surrender, my Lord?"

"Of course, of course!" replied the Knight, "though I will own that this has fallen upon me unexpectedly. Prythee,

good sergeant, if thou knowest, tell me how this has come about, for to me it is inexplicable."

"In truth, my Lord, I know nothing," replied the officer, "though I believe that the whole arose from something that happened this morning in his Grace's bed-chamber. I was sent for by the back staircase, and received orders to attach you here. It is an unpleasant duty, my Lord, but one which we are too often called to perform; I can, therefore, but beg your forgiveness, and say that you must come with me."

Sir Osborne followed in silence, meditating more than ever over his strange fate. His hopes had again been buoyed up, again to be cast down in a more cruel manner than before. There was not now a shade of doubt left; whatever he was accused of was aimed at him under his real name; and it was evident, from the unremitted persecution which he suffered, that Wolsey, or whosoever it was that thus pursued him, was resolved on accomplishing his destruction by all, or any means.

He found some consolation, nevertheless, in reflecting, that he should now have an opportunity of defending his honour and loyalty from any imputation that had been cast upon it, and of proving himself innocent to the conviction of the good and just; although he knew too well, that this was no assurance of safety, against the enmity of the great and powerful.

That Wolsey was the originator of the whole, he could not doubt: and the virulence of his jealousy was too well known to hope that justice or clemency would be shown, where his enmity had been incurred. "However," thought the Knight, "at last, I can but die; I have fronted death a hundred times in the battlefield, and I will not shrink from him now;" but to die as a traitor was bitter, he who had never been aught but loyal and true; but still his conscious innocence, he thought, would rob the block and axe of their worst horror. The proud knowledge that he had acted well in every relationship of life, —to his King, to his Country, to those he loved. Then came the thought of Constance de Grey, in all her summer beauty, and all her gentle loveliness, and all her sweet smiles: was he never to see them again? To be cut off from all those kind sympathies he had felt,—to go down into the cold dark grave where they could reach him never more,—it was too much: and Sir Osborne turned away his eyes.

While these thoughts were busy in his bosom, the sergeant-at-arms led him down the great staircase, and across the hall, on the ground floor of the castle, then opening a door to the *right*, he entered into a long narrow passage, but scantily

lighted, that terminated in another spiral staircase, down which one of the soldiers, who had procured a lamp in the hall, proceeded first, to light them. Sir Osborne followed in silence, though his heart somewhat burned at the idea of being committed to a dungeon. Arrived at the bottom of the steps, several doors presented themselves; and seeing the sergeant examining a large bunch of keys, with whose various marks he did not seem very well acquainted, the Knight would not refrain from demanding, if it were by the King's command, that he was about to give him such a lodging.

"No, my Lord," replied the sergeant, "the King did not direct me to place you in a dungeon: but I must secure your Lordship's person, till such time as the horses are ready to convey you to Calais, and every other place in the castle is full, but that where I am going to put you."

"Well, Sir," replied the Knight, "only beware of what treatment you do show me, lest you may be sorry for it hereafter."

"Indeed, my Lord," answered the man, with a good-humoured smile, rarely met with on the faces of his brethren, "I should bevery sorry to make your Lordship any way uncomfortable, and if you will give me your word of honour, as a Knight, neither to escape, nor to make any attempt to escape, while you are there, I will lock you up in the chapel of the new palace, which is empty enough, God knows, and for half an hour, you will be there as well as any where else—better than in a dungeon certainly."

The Knight readily gave his promise, and the sergeant, after examining the keys again, without better success than before, began to try them, one after another, upon a small iron door in the wall, saying that they could get out that way to the chapel. One of them at length fitted the lock, and two enormous bolts, and an iron bar being removed, the door was swung back, giving egress from the body of the fortress, into a long lightsome passage, where the full sun shone through a long row of windows on each side; while the gilded pillars, and the enamelled ornaments round the windows, the rich arras hangings between them, and the fine carpets spread over the floor, formed a strange and magical contrast with the place they had just quitted, with its rough, damp, stone walls, its dark and gloomy passages, and the massy rudeness of all its features.

"This is the passage made for his Grace, between the palace, and the castle," said the sergeant-at-arms, "let us haste on, my Lord, for fear he should chance to come along it."

Proceeding onwards, catching every now and then a glance at the gay scene of tents without, as they passed the different windows, the officer conducted his prisoner to the end of the passage, where they found a door on either hand: and opening that to the left, he ushered the Knight into the beautiful little building that had been constructed as a temporary chapel for the court, while inhabiting the palace before Guisnes.

"I know, my Lord," said the officer, "that I may trust to your knightly word and promise, not to make any attempt to escape, for I must not even leave a guard at the door, lest his Grace the King should pass, and find that I have put you here, which might move his anger. I therefore leave you for a while, reposing full confidence in your honour, and will take care to have the horses prepared, and be back again before the hour of mass." Thus saying, he ascertained that the other door was fastened, and left Sir Osborne in the chapel, taking heed, notwithstanding his professions of reliance, to turn the key upon him as he went out.

It matters little whether it be a palace or a dungeon wherein he passes the few last hours of life to the prisoner condemned to die, without he possesses one of those happy spirits that can, by the aid of external objects, abstract their thoughts from all that is painful in their fate. If he do indeed, the things around may give him some relief. So, however, could not Darnley; and in point of any mental ease, he might just as well have been in the lowest dungeon of the castle, as in the splendid oratory where he now was. Yet feeling how fruitless was the contemplation of his situation, how little but pain he could derive from thought, and how unnerving to all his energies was the memory of Constance de Grey, under the unhappy circumstances of the present, he strove not to think; and gazed around him to divert his mind from his wayward fortunes, by occupying it with the glittering things around.

Indeed, as far as splendour went, that chapel might have vied with any thing that ever was devised. In length, it was about fifty feet, and though built of wood, its architecture was in that style which we are accustomed to call Gothic. Nothing, however, of the mere walls appeared, for from the roof to the ground, it was hung with cloth of gold, over which fell various festoons of silk, breaking the straight lines of the hangings. To the right and left, Sir Osborne remarked two magnificent closets, appropriated, as he supposed, to the use of the King and Queen, where the same costly stuff that lined the rest of the building, was further enriched by a thick em-

broidery of precious stones; each also had its particular altar, loaded, besides the pax, the crucifix, and the candlesticks, with twelve large images of gold, and a crowd of other ornaments.

The grand altar was still more splendid, the altar-cloth itself being one mass of gold and jewels, and the twelve images of gold with which it was decorated, being, according to Hall, each of the size of a child four years old. An immense canopy of embroidery of pearls overhung it, while round on all sides appeared basins and censers, pixes, gospellers, cruets, paxes, and chalices, of the same glittering materials as the rest of the ornaments.

Sir Osborne advanced, and fixed his eyes upon all the splendid things that was there called in to give pomp and majesty to the worship of the Most High; but he felt more strongly than ever, at that moment, how it was all in vain; and that the small, calm tabernacle of the heart, is that wherein man may offer up the fittest prayer unto his Maker.

Kneeling, however, on the step of the altar, he addressed his petitions to Heaven. He would not pray to be delivered from danger, for that he thought cowardly; but he prayed that God would establish his innocence and his honour,—that God would protect and bless those that he loved; and if it were the Almighty's will he should fall before his enemies, that God would be a support to his father, and a shield to Constance de Grey. Then rising from his knee, Darnley found that his heart was lightened, and that he could look upon his future fate with far more calmness than before.

At that moment the sound of trumpets and clarions met his ear from a distance: gradually it swelled nearer and more near, with gay and martial tones, and approached close to where he was, while shouts and acclamations, and loud and laughing voices mingled with the music, strangely discording with all that was passing in his heart. Presently it grew fainter, and then ceased; though still he thought he could hear the roar of the distant multitude, and now and then a shout; but in a few minutes these also ceased, and crossing his arms upon his breast, he waited till the sergeant-at-arms should come to convey him to Calais, to prison, perhaps ultimately to death.

In a few minutes, some distant steps were heard; they came nearer, nearer still—the key was turned in the lock, and the door opened.—

CHAPTER XX.

"With shame and sorrow fill'd—
Shame for his folly; sorrow out of time
For plotting an unprofitable crime."
DRYDEN.

We must once more take our readers back, if it be but for the space of a couple of hours, and introduce them into the bed-chamber of a King—a place, we believe, as yet sacred from the sacrilegious foot of any novelist.

In the castle of Guisnes then, and in the sleeping-room of Henry the Eighth, King of England, stood, exactly opposite the window, a large square bed, covered with a rich coverlet of arras, which hanging down on each side swept the floor with its golden fringe. High over head, attached to the wall, was a broad and curiously-wrought canopy, whereon the laborious needle of some British Penelope had traced, with threads of gold, the rare and curious history of that famous Knight, Alexander the Great, who was there represented with lance in rest, dressed in a suit of Almaine rivet armour, overthrowing King Darius: who for his part, being in a mighty fright, was whacking on his clumsy elephant, with his sceptre, while the son of Philip, with more effect, appeared pricking him up under the ribs with the point of his spear.

In one corner of the chamber, ranged in fair and goodly order, were to be seen several golden lavers and ewers, together with fine diapers and other implements for washing, while hard by, was an open closet filled with linen and plate of various kinds, with several Venice glasses, a mirror, and a bottle of scented waters. In addition to these pieces of furniture appeared four wooden settles of carved oak, which with two large rich chairs of ivory and gold, made up, that day, the furniture of a king's bed-chamber.

The square lattice window was half open, letting in the sweet breath of the summer morning upon Henry himself, who, with his head half covered with a black velvet night-cap, embroidered with gold, still lay in bed, supporting himself on his elbow, and listening to a long detail of grievances poured forth from the rotund mouth of honest Jekin Groby, who, by the

King's command, encumbered with his weighty bulk one of the ivory chairs by the royal bedside.

Somewhat proud of having had a Lord for the companion of his perils, the worthy clothier enlarged mightily upon the seizure of himself and Lord Darnley by Sir Payan Wileton, seasoning his discourse pretty thickly with "*My Lord did*,"—and "*My Lord said*;" but omitting altogether to mention him by the name of Sir Osborne, thinking it would be a degradation to his high companionship so to do, though had he done so but once, it would have saved many of the misfortunes that afterward befell.

Henry heard him calmly, till he related the threats which Sir Payan held out to his prisoner in that interview, to which Jekin had been an unperceived witness: then starting up, "Mother of God!" cried the King, "what has become of the young gallant? Where is he? ha, man? Now, heaven defend us, the base traitor has not murdered him! ha?"

"Lord a' mercy, you've kicked all the clothes off your Grace's worship," cried Jekin; "let me kiver you up! you'll catch a malplexy! you will!"

"God's life, answer me, man!" cried Henry. "What has become of the young Lord, Osborne Darnley? ha?"

"Bless your Grace, that's just what I cannot tell you," replied Jekin, "for I never saw him after we got out o' window."

"Send for the traitor! have him brought instantly!" exclaimed the King. "See who knocks! Let no one in! Who dares knock so loud at my chamber-door?"

Proceeding round the King's bed, Jekin opened the door, against which some one had been thumping with very little ceremony: but in a moment the valiant clothier started back, exclaiming, "Lord a' mercy, it's a great man with a drawn sword!"

"A drawn sword!" cried Henry, starting up, and snatching his own weapon, which lay beside him. But at that moment Francis ran in, and holding his blade over the King, commanded him to surrender.

"I yield!—I yield!" exclaimed Henry, delighted with the jest. "Now, by my life, my good brother of France, thou hast shown me the best turn ever Prince showed another.—I yield me your prisoner; and as sign of my faith, I beg you to accept this jewel." So saying, he took from his pillow, where it had been laid the night before, a rich bracelet of emeralds, and clasped it on the French King's arm.

"I receive it willingly," answered Francis; "but for my love and amity, and also as my prisoner, you must wear this chain;" and unclasping a jewelled collar from his neck, he laid it down beside the English Monarch.

Many were the civilities and reciprocations of friendly speeches that now ensued; and Henry, about to rise, would fain have called an attendant to assist him, but Francis took the office on himself—"Come, I will be your valet for this morning," said he; "no one but I shall give you your shirt; for I have come over alone to beg some boons of you."

"They are granted from this moment," replied Henry. "But do you say you came alone? Do you mean unattended?"

"With but one faithful friend," answered the French King, "one who not a week ago saved my life by the valour of his arm. 'Tis the best knight that ever charged a lance, and the noblest heart—he is your subject too!"

"Mine!" cried Henry, with some surprise. "How is he called? What is his name? Say, France, and we will love him for his service to you."

"First, hear how he did serve me," replied Francis; and while the English Monarch threaded the intricate mazes of the toilet, he narrated the whole of his adventure with Shoenvelt, which not a little interested Henry, the knight-errantry of whose disposition took fire at the vivid recital of the French King, and almost made him fancy himself on the spot.

"A gallant Knight!" cried he, at length, as the King of France detailed the exploits of Sir Osborne; "a most gallant Knight, on my life! But say, my brother, what is his name? 'Slife, man, let us hear it. I long to know him."

"His name," replied Francis, with an indifferent tone, but at the same time fixing his eyes on Henry's face, to see what effect his answer would produce,—"His name is Sir Osborne Maurice."

A cloud came over the countenance of the English King. "Ha!" said he, thoughtfully, jealous perhaps in some degree that the splendid chivalrous qualities of the young Knight should be transferred to the court of France. "It is like him,—it is very like him. For courage and for feats of arms, I, who have seen many good Knights, have rarely seen his equal—Pity it is that he should be a traitor."

"Nay, nay, my good brother of England," answered Francis; "I will avouch him no traitor, but of unimpeachable loyalty. All I regret is, that his love for your noble person, and for the court of England, should make him wish to quit

me. But to the point. My first boon regards him. He seeks not to return to your royal favour with honour stained and faith doubtful, but he claims your gracious permission to defy his enemies, and to prove their falsehood with his arm. If they be men, let them meet him in fair field; if they be women, or churchmen, lame, or in any way incompetent according to the law of arms, let them have a champion, the best in France or England. To regain your favour and to prove his innocence, he will defy them be they who they may; and here at your feet, I lay down his gage of battle, so confident in his faith and worth, that I myself will be his godfather in the fight. He waits here in the corridor to know your royal pleasure."

Henry thought for a moment. He was not at all willing that the court of Francis, already renowned for its chivalry, should possess still another Knight of so much prowess and skill as he could not but admit in Sir Osborne. Yet the accusations that had been laid against him, and which nobody who considers them—the letter of the Duke of Buckingham, and the evidence of Wilson the bailiff—can deny were plausible, still rankled in the King's mind, notwithstanding the partial explanation which Lady Katrine Bulmer had afforded respecting the Knight's influence with the Rochester ri[illegible]rs. Remembering, however, that the whole or greater part of the information which Wolsey had laid before him, had been obtained, either directly or indirectly, from Sir Payan Wileton, he at length replied, "By my faith, I know not what to say: it is not wise to take the sword from the hand of the law, and trust to private valour to maintain public justice, more than we can avoid.—But you, my royal brother, shall in the present case decide. The accusations against this Sir Osborne Maurice, are many and heavy, but principally resting on the testimonies produced by a certain wealthy and powerful Knight, one Sir Payan Wileton, who, though in other respects, most assuredly a base and disloyal villain, can have no enmity against Sir Osborne, and no interest in seeking his ruin. Last night, by my order, this Sir Payan was brought hither from Calais, on the accusations of that good fool (pointing to Jekin Groby). You comprehend enough of our hard English tongue, to hear him examined yourself, and thus you shall judge. If you find that there is cause to suspect Sir Payan and his witnesses, though it be but in having given the slightest colour of falsehood to their testimony, let Sir Osborne's arm decide his quarrel against the other knight; but if their evi-

dence be clear and indubitable, you shall yield him to be judged by the English law—What say you? Is it not just?"

The King of France at once agreed to the proposal, and Henry turned to Jekin, who had stood by, listening with his mouth open, wonderfully edified at hearing the two Kings converse, though he understood not a word of the language in which they spoke. "Fly to the Page, man," cried the King; "tell him to bid those who have Sir Payan Wileton in custody bring him hither instantly by the back staircase; but first, send to the reverend Lord Cardinal, requiring his counsel in the King's chamber. Haste! dally not I say—I would have them here directly."

Jekin hurried to obey; and after he had delivered the order, returned to the King's chamber, where Henry, while he completed the adjustment of his apparel, related to Francis the nature of the accusation against Sir Osborne, and the proofs that had been adduced of it. The King of France, however, with a mind less susceptible of suspicion, would not believe a word of it, maintaining that the witnesses were suborned, and the letter a forgery; and contended, it would most certainly appear, that Sir Payan had some deep interest in the ruin of the Knight.

The sound of many steps in the antechamber soon announced that some one had arrived. "Quick," cried Henry to Jekin Groby, "get behind the arras, good Jekin. After we have despatched this first business, I would ask the traitor some questions, before he sees thee. Ensconce thee, man! ensconce thee! quick!"

At the King's command, poor Jekin lifted up the corner of the arras, by the side of the bed, and hid himself behind: but though a considerable space existed between the hangings and the wall, the worthy clothier having, as we have hinted, several very protuberant contours in his person, his figure was somewhat discernible still, swelling out the stomach of King Solomon, and the hip of the Queen of Sheba, who were represented in the tapestry, as if one was crooked, and the other had the dropsy.

Scarcely was he concealed, when the page threw open the door, and Cardinal Wolsey entered in haste, somewhat surprised at being called to the King's chamber at so early an hour; but the sight of the French King sufficiently explained the summons, and he advanced, bending low with a proud affectation of humility.

"God bless and shield your Graces both!" said he, "I

feared some evil, by this early call; but now I find that the occasion was one of joy, I do not regret the haste that apprehension gave me."

"Still, we have business, my good Wolsey," replied Henry, "and of some moment. My brother here of France espouses much the cause of the Sir Osborne Maurice who lately sojourned at the court, and won the good will of all, both by his feats of arms and his highborn and noble demeanour; who on the accusations given against him, to you, Lord Cardinal, by Sir Payan Wileton, was banished from the court—nay, judged worthy of attachment for treason."

The King, in addressing Wolsey, instead of speaking in French, which had been the language used between him and Francis, had returned to his native tongue; and good Jekin Groby, hearing what passed concerning Sir Osborne Maurice, was seized with an intolerable desire to have his say too. "Lord a 'mercy!" cried he, popping his head from behind the tapestry, "your Grace's worship don't know—"

"Silence!" cried Henry, in a voice that made poor Jekin shrink into nothing; "Said I not to stay there, ha?"

The worthy clothier drew back his head behind the arras, like a frightened tortoise retracting its noddle within the shelter of its shell; and Henry proceeded to explain to Wolsey, in French, what had passed between himself and Francis.

The Cardinal was, at that moment, striving hard for the King of France's favour, nor was his resentment towards Sir Payan at all abated, though the arrangements of the first meeting between the kings had hitherto delayed its effects. Thus all at first seemed favourable to Sir Osborne, and the Minister himself began to soften the evidence against him, when Sir Payan, escorted by a party of archers and a sergeant-at-arms, was conducted into the King's chamber. The guard drew up across the door of the anteroom, and the knight, with a pale but determined countenance, and a firm heavy step, advanced into the centre of the room, and made his obeisance to the Kings. Henry, now dressed, drew forward one of the ivory chairs for Francis, and the sergeant hastened to place the other by its side for the British Monarch; when, both being seated with Wolsey by their side, the whole group would have formed as strange but powerful a picture, as ever employed the pencil of an artist. The two magnificent Monarchs, in the pride of their youth and greatness, somewhat shadowed by the eastern wall of the room; the grand and dignified form of the Cardinal, with his countenance full of thought and mind; the stern, de

termined aspect of Sir Payan, his whole figure possessing that sort of rigidity, indicative of a violent and continued mental effort, with the full light streaming harshly through the open casement upon his pale cheek and haggard eye, and passing on to the King's bed, and the dressing-robe he had cast off upon it, showing the strange scene in which Henry's impetuosity had caused such a conclave to be held—these objects formed the foreground; while the sergeant-at-arms standing behind the prisoner, and the guard, drawn up across the doorway, completed the picture; till gliding in between the arches, the strange figure of Sir Cesar, the astrologer, with his cheeks sunken and livid, and his eye lighted up by a kind of wild maniacal fire, entered the room, and taking a place close on the right hand of Henry, added a new and curious feature to the already extraordinary scene.

We have before said, that Sir Cesar was known to the whole Court, and to Henry among the rest, whose opinions concerning him it is unnecessary to investigate here, changing every hour, like his opinions on many other things; sometimes thinking him mad, sometimes inspired, according to the caprice of the moment. However, Sir Cesar was a sort of privileged person, whose eccentricities were tolerated even by royalty; and thus his presence caused no surprise, and the King, without taking any notice, began to address Sir Payan Wileton.

"Sir Payan Wileton," said Henry, "many and grievous are the crimes laid to your charge, and of which your own conscience must accuse you, as loudly as the living voices of your fellow-subjects; at least, so by the evidence brought forward against you, it appears to us, at this moment. Most of these charges we shall leave to be investigated by the common course of law; but there are some points, touching which, as they involve our own personal conduct and direction, we shall question you ourself; to which questions, we charge you, on your allegiance, to answer truly and without concealment."

"To your Grace's questions," replied Sir Payan, boldly, "I will answer for your pleasure, though I recognise here no established court of law: but first, I will say that the crimes charged against me, ought to be heavier than I, in my innocence, believe them, to justify the rigour with which I have been treated."

An ominous frown gathered on the King's brow. "Ha!" cried he, forgetting the calm dignity with which he had at first addressed the Knight. "No established court of law!—thou sayest well—we have not the power to question thee? Ha! who

then is the King? Who is the head of all magistrates? Who holds in his hand the power of all the law? By our crown, we have a mind to assemble such a court of law, as within this half hour shall have thy head struck off upon the green."

Sir Payan was silent, and Wolsey replied to the latter part of what he had said, with somewhat more calmness than Henry had done to the former. "You have been treated, Sir," said he, "with not more rigour than you merited; nor with more than is justified by the usual current of the law. It is on affidavit before me, as Chancellor of this kingdom, that you both instigated and aided the Lady Constance de Grey, a ward of court, to fly from the protection and government of the law; and, therefore, attachment issued against your person, and you stand committed for contempt. You had better, Sir, sue for grace and pardon, than aggravate your offence by such unbecoming demeanour."

"Thou hast said well and wisely, my good Wolsey," joined in the King, whose heat had somewhat subsided. "Standing thus reproved, Sir Payan Wileton, answer touching the charges you have brought against one Sir Osborne Maurice; and if you speak truly, to our satisfaction, you shall have favour and lenity at our hands.—Say, Sir, do you still hold to that accusation?"

"All I have to reply to your Grace," answered the Knight, resolved even if he fell himself, to work out his hatred against Sir Osborne, with that vindictive rancour, that the injurer always feels towards the injured,—"all that I have to reply is, that what I said was true: and that if I had stated all that I suspected, as well as what I knew, I should have made his treason look much blacker than it does even now."

"Do you understand, France?" demanded Henry, turning to Francis: "shall I translate his answers, to show you his true meaning?"

The King of France, however, signified that he comprehended perfectly; and Sir Payan, after a moment's thought, proceeded.

"I should suppose your Grace could have no doubt left upon that traitor's guilt; for the charge against him rests, not on my testimony, but upon the witness of various indifferent persons, and upon papers in the handwriting of his friends and abettors.

"Villain!" muttered Sir Cesar, between his teeth; "hypocritical, snake-like villain!" Both the King and Sir Payan heard him, but Henry merely raised his hand, as if commanding silence, while the eyes of the traitorous Knight flashed a momentary fire as they met the glance of the old man; and he

proceeded, "I had no interest, your Grace, in disclosing the plot I did; though, had I done wisely, I would have held my peace, for it will make many my enemies, even many more than I dreamed of then. I have since discovered that I then only knew one-half of those that are implicated.—I know them all now," he continued, fixing his eye on Sir Cesar; "but as I find the reward that follows honesty, I shall bury the whole within my own breast."

"On those points, Sir, we will leave our law to deal with you," replied Henry. "There are punishments for those that conceal treason; and by my halidame, no favour shall you find in us, without you make a free and full confession,—then our grace may touch you, but not else. But to the present question, my bold Sir. Did you ever see Sir Osborne Maurice before the day that he was arrested by your order, on the charge of having excited the Cornishmen to revolt? and before God, we enjoin you—say, are you excited against him with feelings of interest, hatred, or revenge?"

"On my life," replied Sir Payan, boldly, "I never saw him but on that one day; and as I hope for salvation in heaven," and here he made a hypocritical grimace of piety, "I have no one reason, but pure honesty, to accuse him of these crimes."

A low groan burst from behind the tapestry at this reply; and Henry gave an angry glance towards the worthy clothier's place of concealment; but Francis, calling back his attention, begged him to ask the Knight in English, whether he had ever known Sir Osborne Maurice by any other name, or in any other character.

Sir Cesar's eyes sparkled, and Sir Payan's cheek turned pale, as Henry put the question; but he boldly replied, "Never, so help me heaven! I never saw him, or heard of him, or knew him, by any other name than Osborne Maurice."

"Oh you villainous great liar! Oh, you hypocritical thief!" shouted Jekin Groby, bolting out from behind the tapestry, unable to contain himself any longer. "I don't care, I don't care a groat for any one; but I won't hear you tell his Grace's worship such a string of lies, all as fat and as well tacked together as Christmas sausages. Lord a' mercy! I'll tell your Graces, both of you, how it was, for you don't know, that's clear.—This here Sir Osborne Maurice, that you are asking about, is neither more nor less than that Lord Darnley that I was telling your Grace of this morning.—Lord, now, didn't I hear him tell that sweet young lady, Mistress Constance de Grey, all about it;—how he could not bear to live any longer abroad in these foreign parts, and how he had come back under

the name of Sir Osborne Maurice, all for to get your Grace's love, as an adventurous Knight. And then didn't that Sir Payan—yes, you great thief, you did, for I heard you—didn't he come and crow over him, and say, that now he had got him in his power? And then didn't he offer to let him go, if he would sign some papers? and then when he would not, didn't he swear a great oath, that he would murther him, saying, 'he would make his tenure good by the extinction of the race of Darnley?' You did, you great rogue! you know you did!—and, Lord, a' mercy! to think of your going about to tell his Grace such lies—your own king, too, who should never hear any thing but the truth. God forgive you, for you're a great sinner, and the devils will never keep company with you when you go to purgatory, but will kick you out into the other place, which is worse still, folks say.—And now I humbly beg your Grace's pardon, and will go back again, if you like, behind the hangings; but I couldn't abear to hear him cheat you like that."

The sudden appearance of Jekin Groby, and the light he cast upon the subject, threw the whole party into momentary confusion. Sir Payan's resolution abandoned him; his knees shook, and his very lips grew pale. Sir Cesar gazed upon him with triumphant eyes, exclaiming, "Die, die! what hast thou left but to die?" At the same time, Wolsey questioned Jekin Groby, who told the same straightforward tale; and Henry explained the whole to Francis, whose comprehension of the English tongue did not quite comprise the jargon of the worthy clothier.

Sir Payan Wileton, however, resolved to make one last despairing effort, both to save himself and to ruin his enemies; for the diabolical spirit of revenge was as deeply implanted in his bosom as that of self-preservation. He thought then, for a moment, glanced rapidly over his situation, and cast himself on his knee before the King. "Great and noble monarch," said he, in a slow, impressive voice, "I own my fault—I acknowledge my crime; but it is not such as you think it. Hear me but out, and you yourself shall judge whether you will grant me mercy, or show me rigour. I confess, then, that I had entered, as deeply as others, into the treasonable plot I have betrayed against your throne and life; nay, more, that I would never have divulged it, had I not found that the Lord Darnley had, under the name of Sir Osborne Maurice, become the Duke of Buckingham's chief agent, and was to be rewarded by the restitution of Chilham Castle, for which some

vague indemnity was proposed to me hereafter. On hearing it, I dissembled my resentment, and pretending to enter more heartily than ever into the scheme, I found that the ambitious Duke reckoned, as his chief hope in case of war, the skill and chivalry of this Lord Darnley, who promised, by his hand, to seat him on the throne. I learned, moreover, the names of all the conspirators, among whom that old man is one," and he pointed to Sir Cesar, who gazed upon him with a smile of contempt and scorn, whose intensity had something of sublime. "Thirsting for revenge," proceeded Sir Payan, "and with my heart full of rage, I commanded four of my servants to stop the private courier of the Duke, when I knew he was charged with letters concerning this Sir Osborne Maurice, and thus I obtained those papers I placed in the hands of my Lord Cardinal——"

"But how shall we know they are not forgeries?" cried Henry. "Your honour, Sir, is so gone, and your testimony so suspicious, that we may well suppose those letters cunning imitations of the good Duke's hand. We have heard of such things—ay, marry have we."

"Herein, happily, your Grace can satisfy yourself, and prove my truth," replied Sir Payan; "send for the servants whose names I will give, examine them, put them to the torture if you will, and if you wring not from them, that on the twenty-ninth of March, they stopped, by my command, the courier of the Duke of Buckingham, and took from him his bag of letters, condemn me to the stake. But mark me, King of England; I kneel before you pleading for life; grant it to me, with but my own hereditary property, and Buckingham with all the many traitors that are now aiming at your life, and striving for your crown, shall fall into your hand, and you shall have full evidence against them. I will instantly disclose all their names, and give you such proof against their chief, that to-morrow you can reward his treason with the axe, nor fear to be called unjust. But if you refuse me your royal promise sacredly given, here before your brother King, to yield me life, and liberty, and lands; as soon as I have fulfilled my word, I will go to my death in silence like the wolf, and never will you be able to prove any thing against them, for that letter is nothing without my testimony to point it aright."

"You are bold!" said Henry, "you are very bold! But our subjects' good, and the peace of our country, may weigh with us! What think you, Wolsey?" and for a moment or two, he consulted in a low tone with the Cardinal and the King of

France. "I believe, my liege," said Wolsey, whose hatred towards Buckingham was of the blindest virulence, "I believe that your Grace will never be able to prove his treasons on the Duke, without this man's help. Perhaps you had better promise."

Francis bit his lip and was silent, but Henry, turning to Sir Payan, replied, "The tranquillity of our realm, and the happiness of our people, overcome our hatred to your crime; and therefore we promise, that if by your evidence, treason worthy of death, be proved upon Edward Duke of Buckingham, you shall be free in life, in person, and in lands."

"Never!" cried the voice of Sir Cesar, mounting into a tone of thunder; "never!" and springing forward, he caught Sir Payan by the throat, grappled with him for an instant, with a maniacal vigour, and drawing the small dagger he always carried, plunged it into the heart of the knight, with such force, that one might hear the blow of the hilt against his ribs. The whole was done in a moment, before any one was aware, and the red blood, and the dark spirit, rushing forth together, with a loud groan the traitor fell prone upon the ground: while Sir Cesar, without a moment's pause, turned the dagger against his own bosom, and drove it in up to the very haft.

Wolsey drew back in horror and affright. Francis and Henry started up, laying their hands upon their swords; Jekin Groby crept behind the arras; and the guards rushed in to seize the slayer; but Sir Cesar waved them back with the proud and dignified air of one who feels that earthly power has over him no farther sway. "What fear ye?" said he, turning to the Kings; and still holding the poniard tight against his bosom, as if to restrain the spirit from breathing forth through the wound. "There is no offence in the dead or in the dying. Hear me, King of England! and hear the truth! which thou wouldst never have heard from that false caitiff. Yet I have little time—the last moments of existence speed with fast wings towards another shore—give me a seat, for I am faint."

They instantly placed for him one of the settles, and after gazing round for a moment, with that sort of distressful vacancy of eye, that speaks how the brain reels, he made an effort, and went on, though less coherently.—"All he has said is false.—I am on the brink of another world, and I say it is false as the hell to which he is gone.—Osborne Darnley, the good, the noble, and the true—the son of my best and oldest friend, knew of no plot, heard of no treason.—He was in Eng-

and but two days, when he fell into that traitor's hands.—He never saw Buckingham but once.—The Osborne Maurice named in that duke's letter, is not he—one far less worthy."

"Who then is he?" cried the King, impatiently. "Give me to know him, if you would have me believe. Never did I hear of such a name, but in years long past, an abettor of Perkyn Warbeck. Who then is this Sir Osborne Maurice, ha? Mother of God! name him!"

"I—I—I—King of England!" cried the old man. "I, who had he been guided by me, would have taught Richard, king of England, whom you style Perkyn Warbeck, to wrench the sceptre from the hand of your usurping father—I, whose child was murdered by that dead traitor, in cold blood, after the rout at Taunton. I—I it was who predicted to Edward Bohun, that his head should be highest in the realm of England—I it is that predict it still." As he spoke the last words, the old man suddenly drew forth the blade of the dagger from his breast, upon which a full stream of blood instantly gushed forth and deluged the ground. Still struggling with the departing spirit, he started on his feet—put his hand to his brow—"I come! I come!" cried he—reeled—shuddered, and fell dead beside his enemy.

CHAPTER XX.

"They all as glad as birds of joyous prime
Thence led her forth, about her dancing round."
SPENSER.

THE bustle, the confusion, the clamour, the questions, and the explanations that ensued, we shall leave the reader to imagine, satisfied that his vivid fancy will do far more justice to such a scene than our worn-out pen.—When the bodies of Sir Payan Wileton and his companion in death, had been removed from the chamber of the King, and some sand strewed upon the ground to cover the gory memories that such deeds had left behind, order and tranquillity began to regain their dominion.

"By my faith, a bloody morning's entertainment have we had," said Francis. "But you are happy, my good brother of

England, in having traitors that will thus despatch each other, and cheat the headsman of his due. However, from what I have gathered, Osborne Darnley, the Knight of Burgundy, can no longer seem a traitor in the eyes of any one."

"No, truly, my gracious Lord," replied Wolsey, willing to pleasure the King of France. "He stands freed from all spot or blemish, and well deserves the kingly love of either noble monarch."

"'Slife! my good Lord Cardinal," cried Henry, "speak for yourself alone! Now I say, on my soul, he is still a most deep and egregious traitor. Not only, like that Sir Payan Wileton, in having planned his treason, but in having executed it."

"Nay, how so?" cried Francis, startled at this new charge. "In what is he a traitor now?"

"In having aided Francis King of France," replied Henry, smiling, "to storm our Castle of Guisnes, and take his liege Lord and Sovereign prisoner."

"Oh, if that be the case," cried Francis, "I give him up to your royal indignation; but still we have a boon to ask, which our gracious brother will not refuse."

"Name it! name it!" exclaimed Henry. "By St. Mary, it shall go to pay our ransom whatever it be."

"You have in your court," replied Francis, "one Lady Constance de Grey, who, though your born subject, is no less vassal to the crown of France; owing homage for the counties of Boissy and the Val de Marne, assured to your late subject the Lord de Grey, by Charles the Eighth, when he gave him in marriage Constance Countess of Boissy, as a reward for services rendered in Italy—"

"We see your object, O most Christian King!" cried Henry, laughing. "We see your object! What, what a messenger of Cupid are you? Well, have your wish. We give her to your Highness, so to dispose of as you may think fit; but at the same time, claim Lord Osborne Darnley, at your hands, to punish according to his demerits. What say you? ha!"

"Agreed, agreed!" replied the King of France. "He waits me, as I said even now, in the corridoir without, and doubtless thinks I sue for him in vain. Those guards must have passed him in the corridor."

"No, no! they came the other way," said Henry. "Ho! without there! Sergeant-at-arms, take four stout halbardiers, and going into the west corridor, attach me for high-treason

the Lord Osborne Darnley, whom you will there find waiting. Hist! hear me, man. Use him with all gentleness. (we do but jest with him,) and make some fair excuse to shut him up in one of the chambers of the new palace, the nearer to the great hall the better. Away! Make speed, and above all return quick, and let me know where you have put him; but take heed, and let him not see that we mock him—haste!—My good Lord Cardinal," he continued, turning to Wolsey, "though it be an unmeet task for one of your grave dignity, to bear a message to a lady, yet on this day of joy, when our good brother France comes here to greet us in brotherly love, even wise men shall forget their seriousness, and be as gay as boys. Hie then, good Wolsey, to our Lady Queen. Tell her to call all the fair flowers of England round about her in our great hall, to welcome Francis of France, and that we will be there immediately upon your steps."

The Cardinal bowed low, and instantly obeyed; and Henry proceeded in whispering consultation with Francis till the return of the sergeant-at-arms, then turning to the worthy clothier, who, when he found all the killing and slaying was over, had come out from behind the arras, to enjoy the air of royalty, "come, good Jekin," cried Henry, "now a task for thee—hark, man;" and he whispered something to honest Groby, who instantly replied, "Lord a' mercy, yes, your Grace! I know Wilson Goldsmith well; I'll go to him directly—no trouble in life—Lord, I guess how it's going to be—well, I'm vastly glad, I do declare. Lord a' mercy! I hope your Grace's worship will let me be there!"

"Ay, man, ay!" cried the King, "make speed, and come with him. Ho, Snell! give me a gown of tissue—bid the guard be ready, we will cross the green to the palace. Let the marshals be called to clear the way."

In a very few minutes all was prepared, and as the two Kings were descending the grand staircase of the castle, news was brought that a band of French nobles, anxious for the safety of their king, had come over from Ardres at all speed to seek him. Francis sent his commands that they should dismount in the court; and on issuing out of the castle, the Monarch found a splendid party of the English and French nobility mingled together, waiting to give them the good morrow.

"Ha, Alençon, what fear you, man?" cried the King of France. "We are all safe. Sir Richard Heartley, look not for Lord Darnley, he is in security: follow, and you will see him presently."

"Gentlemen all, you are most welcome," said Henry; "follow us all that love us, to our poor palace, here without; and we will make you better cheer, where ladies' words shall replace this summer air, and their sweet looks the sunshine.—Sound on before!"

The trumpets sounded, and the ushers and marshals clearing the way for the two Kings, they passed out of the castle gate, and traversed the green on foot, amid the shouts and acclamations of the crowd, that the arrival of the French nobles, together with various rumours of something extraordinary having happened, had collected in the neighbourhood of the royal lodging.

Arm in arm with Francis, Henry, delighting, with ostentatious magnificence, to show himself to the people, passed round to the front of the palace; and entering the court which we have already described, he proceeded at once to the great hall, called the hall of the cloth of silver, to which on the announcement of his intentions by Wolsey, the Queen had hastily summoned all the elect of the court. On the entrance of the Kings, with all the train of noblemen who had followed them, a temporary confusion ensued, while Francis was presented to the Queen of England, and Henry whispered to her a few brief hints of what had taken place.

"Room, room, Lords and Ladies," cried he at length, "let us have space."

"There would not be space enough for him in the world, if he had his will," whispered Lady Katrine Bulmer to Constance de Grey, who stood by her side, unwillingly appearing in such a meeting. "On my life, Constance, his eyes are fixed upon us. Now, what would I give to be a King, if it were but to outstare him."

"The Lady Constance de Grey!" said Henry, in a loud tone, "we would speak with the Lady de Grey."

"Nay, speak gently," said the Queen. "Good, my Lord, you will frighten her. Constance, come hither to the Queen, your friend!"

With a pale cheek, and a beating heart, Constance advanced to the side of the Queen, and bending her eyes upon the ground awaited in silence, not daring to look around.

"Fear not, fair one," said Henry, "we are not angry, but only sorry to lose you. Here is our noble brother, Francis of France, claims you as his vassal, at our hands." Constance looked up, and saw the King of France's eye bent on her with a smile that gave her courage. "Now, notwithstanding the

great love we bear him," continued Henry, "we might have resisted his demand, inasmuch as you are our born subject, had you not shown some slight perverseness against our repeated commands. We therefore must, and will resign you into his hands, unless you instantly agree to receive such lord to be your husband, as we shall judge fitting for your rank and station."

"Oh, no! no, my Lord!" cried Constance, clasping her hands, and forgetting, in her fear of fresh persecution, the crowd by which she was surrounded. "Force me not, I beseech your Grace, to wed against my will."

"You see!" said Henry, turning to the King of France, with a smile, "you see the lady is headstrong! Take her, my good brother; I give her up to you. There, sweetheart, is your Lord and Sovereign; see if you can obey him better."

Francis took the fair girl by the hand, and bending down his head, said in a kindly tone,—"Lady, fear not. Lift up your eyes, and tell me if there is one in all this circle you would make your choice."

"No, indeed, my Lord," faltered forth Constance, without looking round; "all I ask is to be left in peace."

"If you have ever seen any one to whom you could give your heart, tell me," said Francis.—Constance was silent.—"Then I am to judge that you have not," continued the King; "so I will choose for you."

Constance raised her eyes with a supplicating look; but Francis's face was turned away towards Henry, who with a laughing glance had taken the Queen by the hand, and was leading her towards one of the doors.

"Come, we must follow," cried Francis. "Lord Cardinal, we shall need your company."

Constance gazed round with doubt and apprehension, but Francis led her forward immediately after the King and Queen of England, whispering as they went,—"Fear not, sweet lady; you are with a friend that knows all"

The whole court followed along one of the splendid galleries of the palace, preceded by Henry and Katherine, who stopped, however, before a door, from before which a page held back the hangings, and—"Here," said the King of England, putting a key into Francis's hand—"here you take precedence,—this is the cage, and here is the fetter-maker," pointing to a respectable-looking merchant in a long furred robe, who stood with Jekin Groby in a niche hard by.

More and more confused, not knowing what to fear or what

to believe, the very uncertainty made Constance's heart sink, more than actual danger would have done;—but still the King of France led her forward, even before Queen Katherine, and, putting the key in the lock, threw open the door, and drew her gently in: when the first object that met her sight, was Osborne Darnley, with his arms folded on his breast, standing before the high altar of a splendid chapel.—Her heart beat—eyes grew dim—her brain reeled; and she would have fallen fainting to the ground, but Darnley started forward and clasped her to his heart.

"Nay, nay, this is too much!" cried the Queen, advancing; "see, the poor girl faints. My good Lord, indeed this must not be to-day.—It has been too much for her already. Some day before the two courts part, we will pray my good Lord Cardinal to speak a blessing on their love. Bear her into the sacristy, Sir Osborne. Katrine Bulmer, giddy namesake, help your friend, while I pray their Graces both to return into the hall."

THE END.

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